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*Robert Louis Stevenson
in California*

By
Katharine D. Osbourne

With Sixty-nine Illustrations



Chicago

1911

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ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

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CARMEL BAY



PINES AT MONTEREY

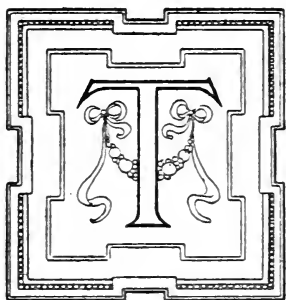


CYPRESS TREES, MONTEREY



A BIT OF MONTEREY COAST

Robert Louis Stevenson
in California



THE wide fame of California comes not altogether from her natural benefits. As much as in these her glory rests in her heroes. But, peculiarly, they were not born on the soil, — are not the products of the poetry, the spirit, and the occasion of the West Coast, but were attracted from other lands. The explanation is obvious: lack of time, lack of generations since the occupation other than by the aboriginal Indians and the scattered Spanish settlers. We have yet to look to native sons and daughters for native genius.

But of all the borrowed heroes since Drake and the Franciscan friars, per-

haps not another has brought more honor to California than Robert Louis Stevenson. He came and went and found no home in this new Western country. From his coming till his going was less than a twelvemonth. He visited few parts of the State, only Monterey, San Francisco, and the slopes of Mount Saint Helena. The Sierras and the Sacramento Valley were seen by him from a railway car window, and the San Francisco Bay from the ferry-boat. Yet this cursory visit of less than a year in time has made Stevenson singularly Californian. It has come to be that these facts of Stevenson's abodes stand out above all others: that his boyhood was passed in Scotland, where he was born; that he lived the last years of his life in the South Sea; and that he spent some while in California.

This prominence given to his California sojourn is due chiefly to three reasons: that his motive in coming was after a piece of knight-errantry; that

his experiences were exceptional; and that subsequently he used his knowledge of California in some of his best books. With what eyes did he see! With what a pen did he write! And it was the peculiarity of his art that he communicated through it to his readers something of the personal charm and fascination he exercised over those who knew him, so that for the countless lovers of Stevenson in every corner of the world this great Pacific State has a new meaning, and every scene familiar to him is endowed with an interest both tender and romantic. Truly, California was never more fortunate in an adopted son, who both enhanced and spread abroad her honor.

For Stevenson himself his coming to California was one of the most vital and decisive steps in his life. It marked the dividing line between a reckless, intense, but indulgent youth and a deep and sincere manhood.

We will not judge too harshly his

early vagaries and indiscretions. As much as they were the result of the hot blood of youth and wayward companions they were also caused, as he said of Burns, "from being formed for love; he had passion, tenderness, and a singular bent in the direction; he could foresee, with the intuition of an artist, what love ought to be, and he could not conceive a worthy life without it; he was greedy after every shadow of the true divinity." The tempestuous, intense, betraying temperament of the artist and lover and the generous, noble leanings of the man were for long conflicting elements in his character.

What it was that drew those forces into one where they no longer opposed but served each other; what special circumstances aroused all his latent conscientiousness and sincerity and determined him to pursue no longer broken ends but one great comprehensive purpose in which soul and body united, is not one of the confidences he has seen fit

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MIDWAY POINT, MONTEREY COAST

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to make us, even if he knew himself. It may have been, as he described another change in his life, — from idleness to industry: “I was never conscious of a struggle, nor registered a vow, nor seemingly had anything personally to do with the matter. I came about like a well-handled ship. There stood at the wheel that unknown steersman whom we call God.” What we do know is that this wild journey from Scotland to California was evidence of the change.

In later days, in retrospect viewing some acts of his life, he sorrowfully called himself Don Quixote. His proposed journey to America was at that time regarded by the friends in his confidence in that light, but it was sublime.

In poor health he set out, and with little money in his pocket, and small prospects of more, since he had voluntarily cut himself off from the allowance which his father had always made him, by this step contrary to his father’s wishes. Neither had he any great reputation as

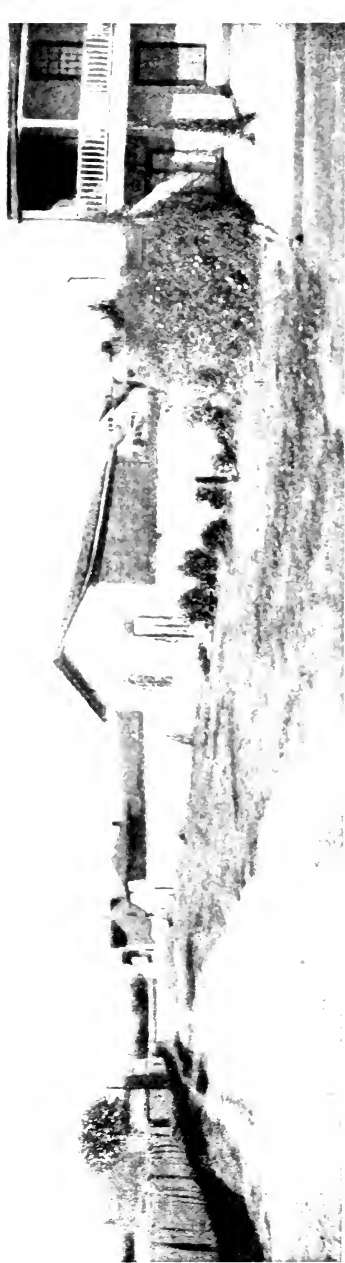
yet in his chosen profession of letters, nor had he an assured publisher. His heart was heavy with the knowledge of the sorrow he was causing his devoted parents, whose only offspring he was, and whom he himself loved dearly; but he saw no other way than to involve them in his decision. Yet through all, his heart never quailed. Worn out with the discomforts of the voyage in the steerage and the days in an emigrant train, "his body all to whistles," as he styled it, made melancholy by his sordid surroundings and the dreary country through which he was carried, he still was sustained by the conviction, "I am doing right." "Our journey is through ghostly desert, sagebrush and alkali, and rocks without form and color, a sad corner of the world. We are going along Bitter Creek just now, a place infamous in the history of emigration, a place I shall remember myself among the blackest." And yet he had but one explanation in his letter to a friend. "I am doing right.





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HOUSE IN WHICH ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON ROOMED, MONTEREY BY PILLBONY PUBLISHING CO.



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THE HALL OF RECORDS IN HOUSE OF THE WINES, MONTEREY

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I know no one will think so, and don't care."

*"Thin-legged and chested, slight unspeakable,
Neat-footed, artist-handed—all his face
Lean, high-boned, curved of nose, and
quick with race,
The brown eyes glittering with vivacity.*

*"Bold-lipped, rich-tinted, changeful as the sea,
Is instinct with a bright romantic grace
Intense, wild, delicate—with a subtile trace
Of feminine force and fitful energy.*

*"Valiant in velvet, light in ragged luck,
Most vain, most sensitive, keenly critical,
Buffoon and poet, lover and sensualist:
Of Bottom take a little, much of Puck,
More Cleopatra, Hamlet most of all,
Combine, restrain, release, and—have
we missed?"*

Inadequate indeed! And the lack
W. E. Henley, the author of this picture
of Stevenson in his twenties, tried to

rectify later by remodelling his verses as they were finally printed, and by adding "Shorter Catechist," but that were far from sufficient portrayal for the mature man.

Stevenson was always a wanderer. When his mother once expostulated with him, he laughingly responded, "You should not have had a tramp for a son." He was fond of vagabond journeys, and as often as opportunity permitted, he indulged his gypsy propensities, for novelty, for reckless gayety, for experiences, and to learn new sides of life. Or often it was to escape from himself and the demon hauntings of a too active mind that knew no appeasement, that he went on long walking tours, voyaged in a yacht, or travelled with a donkey. And that characteristic which we spoke of at first was a cause of some of these migrations; for with all Stevenson's great capacity for love, and with his heart ever ready to bestow it, he seems not to have inspired with a like devotion the young

women he admired. "That they cared not for him, for the flesh on his bones," was the way he bitterly put it.

His first love was a fiasco. The young lady would not take him seriously, made light of his protestations, but did what she could to break his heart. And he told a friend in California that even then, years after, he could not bear to think on that time. The second affair was still more serious and even less fortunate, for it continued over the years in which, if his heart had been free, he in all probability would have had it engaged in a more happy venture. The lady yielded to his devotion, pleased and flattered probably by so much ardent and sincere passion on the part of one who already began to give evidence of his unusual intellectual endowments, if not of his genius; but at last she changed for another attachment, which left young Stevenson bereft in heart, "caring not whether he lived or died."

Thus, twice, change and travel were the

antidotes he applied to his wounded and tortured affections. The Inland Voyage was one of these; and it is worthy of notice that with all its confessions, of the tormented state of his heart there is not the least intimation. But then Stevenson himself has said, "I believe that literature should give joy"; and he held that a dispirited word was a crime against mankind.

A third deep attachment followed quickly on the failure of the second. Quoting once more from Stevenson's essay on Burns, we may find the reason. "It is perhaps one of the most touching things in human nature, as it is a commonplace of psychology, that when a man has just lost hope or confidence in one love, he is then most eager to find and lean upon another. The universe could not be yet exhausted; there must be hope and love waiting for him somewhere."

Going to join some painter friends in a small village, called Gretz, lying just



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ZENZEE, NEAR MITCH CYPRESS, MONTEREY

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outside the Forest of Fontainebleau, in France, a place frequented in summer by artist students from Paris, Stevenson, fresh from his Inland Voyage, met an American lady, Mrs. Osbourne, for whom he conceived a warm regard from the first, and a knightly interest on account of some unfortunate circumstances in her life. The friendship was maintained throughout the rest of the lady's visit abroad. In Paris, at Gretz again, and in London they continued to see each other until her departure with her children for her home in California.

But this was not to be the end. Separation did not bring forgetfulness. Nearly a year afterward, on receiving an appeal by cable from Mrs. Osbourne, he did not hesitate for an instant to hasten to her side. Stevenson's chivalry toward all women was infinite, and his heart was always full of sympathy for their unequal position. Exhibitions of vanity and meanness in men's relations to women, witnessed all too frequently,

drew from him vehement indignation and pity.

An exalted sense of fidelity was now drawing him westward. With no word to his parents about his going, in the early part of August, 1879, and in the twenty-ninth year of his age, he departed from Edinburgh bound for the far-away and unknown Western world.

In this volume we are not to concern ourselves with the whole journey, but for the fuller understanding of the California episode we must take up the tale just before his arrival. There can be no adequate notion of the green, fruitful slopes of the Pacific Coast without setting them in mind against the vast and terrible rocky wilderness that lies behind the Sierras. The long journey through waste plains, without a tree, without a patch of sward, nothing but sage brush, eternal sage brush, through amorphous mountains without a commanding peak, masses of tumbled boulders, and for color, gray verging toward brown, gray

1883
CALIFORNIA



THE COAST, NEAR THE PACIFIC CAMP GROUNDS



verging toward black, is greatly dispiriting. His words make our hearts leap as did his own on the occasion, as he depicts the leaving behind of the unsightly desert and the sudden shifting of the scene as the train of the Central Pacific Railway shot out from the sterile cañons of Emigrant Pass and began its plunge down the seaward slopes of the Sierras, — a picture of color, freshness, and loveliness.

In his book which describes the whole journey, "Across the Plains," and in his letters to his friends he dwells upon the theme. And memory rejoices to recall each new feature which greeted his eye as the train wound its way downward into the valley of the Sacramento River, — sweeps of forest dropping thousands of feet toward the far sea level, spires of pines along the sky line, the cascades and trouty pools of a mountain river, Blue Cañon, Alta, Dutch Flat, and all the old mining camps, and hillsides of orchards and vineyards. Finally, set in

a plain of wheat fields, the garden city of Sacramento was reached and later Oakland, beside the blue expanse of San Francisco Bay. It was early morning when Stevenson crossed the bay on the ferry-boat. The sun was just beginning to gild the head and spread itself over the shapely shoulders of Tamalpais, the unweary sentry at the Golden Gate. And the sea fog, opalescent in the morning sunshine, rose over the citted hills of San Francisco.

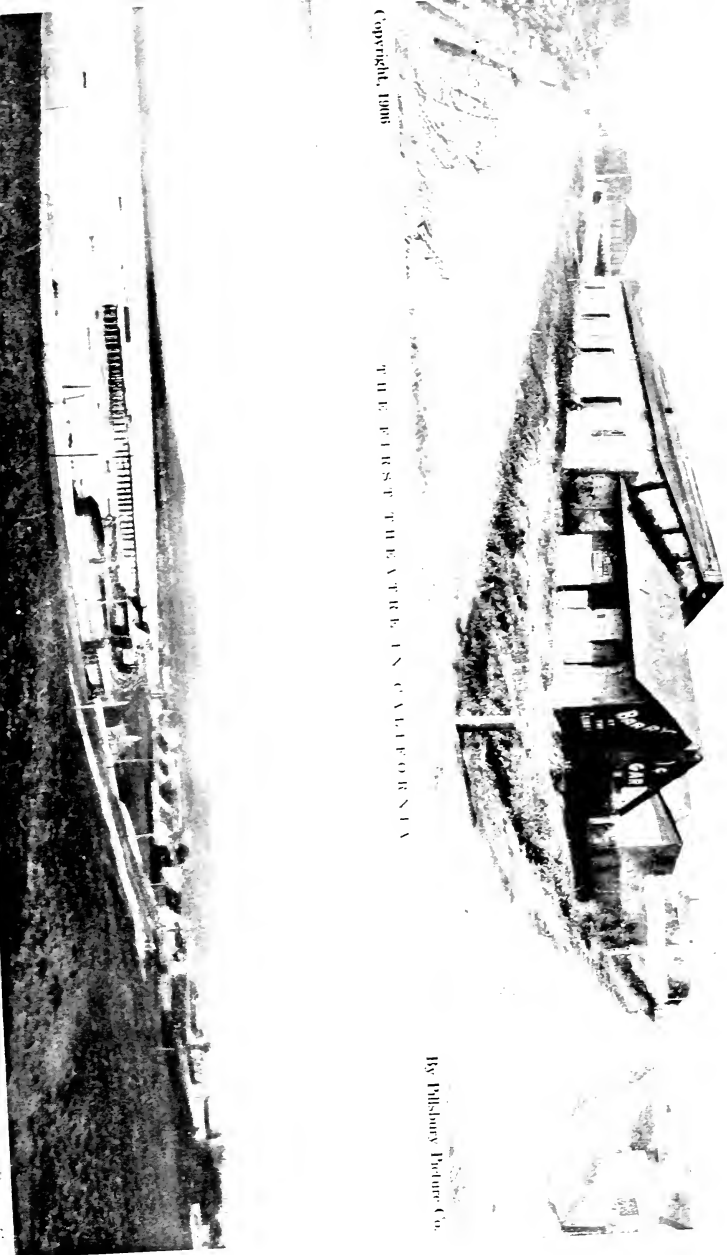
Nine years afterward, when in the trading schooner *Equator*, on his way to the Gilbert Islands in the Pacific, when he began "The Wrecker," his mind went back again to the same scenes and he brought his hero by the same way and described again his own first golden glimpse of California.

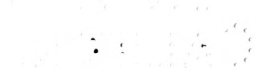
Throughout his travelling he had been suffering in his health from his usual complaint, weak lungs, and he had gotten at a way-side eating place some food that acted on him like poison. That he had

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THE FIRST THEATRE IN CALIFORNIA

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been able to complete the journey, that he had not fallen by the way, was due to sheer force of will. He did not stop longer in San Francisco than to get his train for Monterey where Mrs. Osbourne was at that time staying and awaiting his coming. He collapsed utterly on his arrival there. Open air was always his remedy in illness and now he thought to try it again. After seeing Mrs. Osbourne he took a horse and went on eighteen miles farther to an Angora goat ranch in the Santa Lucia Mountains.

Of the owners of the ranch one was Captain Smith, an old man, a great bear-hunter, who had been in the Mexican wars; the other was a pilgrim who had been out with the Bear Flag under Frémont when California was taken by the States, — men of action and adventure much after Stevenson's own heart.

In the first days he camped alone out under a tree. He was terribly ill, dangerously so. He could do nothing but fetch water for himself and his horse,

light a fire, and make coffee. After four days, Captain Smith happened round where he was, and finding Stevenson and pronouncing him "*real*" sick, took him to his house, where, together with his partner, he tended him with true frontier hospitality and kindness, prescribing homely remedies and treatment.

Captain Smith's wife was away from home, but there were the children with their father. When Stevenson was better he showed his appreciation of their goodness to him in such way as he could, by giving the children reading lessons. And since Stevenson was one of the most beautiful readers himself, it may be hoped that they were helped to an accomplishment with which Stevenson frequently delighted his family circle. After three weeks he was sufficiently revived in health to return to Monterey.

✓ His money was already nearly exhausted. He did not know of an amount which at the time lay in the New York post-office, sent by his father



JULES SIMONEAU

*Drawn from Life by Theodore J.
Keane*



and mother on finding that he had started to America, without leaving an address. They despatched it to him to the general delivery of New York City, in hopes that he might call there for his mail.

He found in the large adobe house of Dr. Heintz, a Frenchman, upstairs, in the ell, two airy rooms with five windows opening on a balcony. The rooms were barely furnished, but it seems that there was even more furniture than Stevenson wanted; for he did not occupy the bed, but slept on the floor in camp blankets. For his meals he went to a little restaurant kept also by a Frenchman, M. Jules Simoneau. It was a humble affair: a small wine room in front and a dining-room behind. In the little whitewashed back room where the table was spread, there were daily gathered with Stevenson, Francis, the baker, Augustin Dutra, an Italian fisherman, and Simoneau himself; and now and then a rancher from the mountains, staying in town over night,

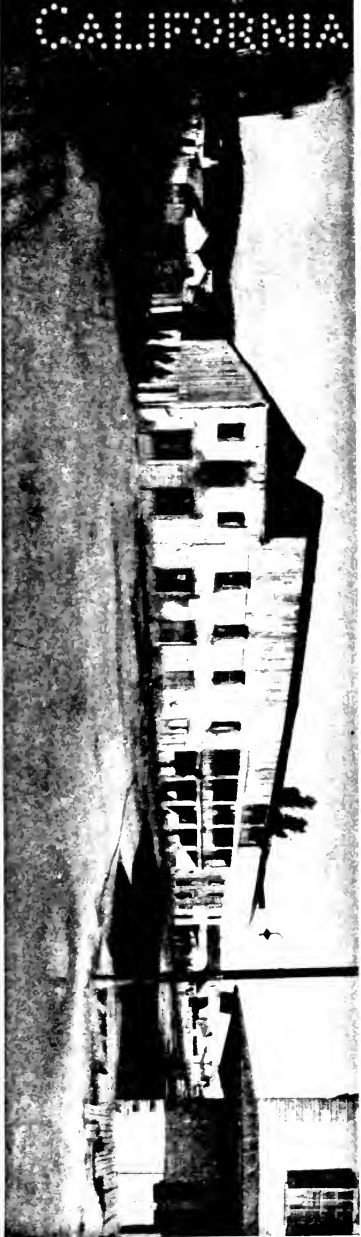
joined them. They were waited on by a kind, quiet Mazatlan Indian woman who was Simoneau's sole helper in his business.

The matter of a place to lodge and board having been settled, Stevenson set himself down to the serious matter of writing. He began first of all to prepare for publication the notes he had made on the steamship *Deronia*, in which he had come across the Atlantic, thus beginning "The Amateur Emigrant."

After this, he partly wrote a novel, which was later given up, deemed by him of little merit. It may have sunk under the burden of its long and pompous title, "A Chapter in the Experiences of Arizona Breckonridge; or, A Vendetta of the West." Had this work ever been completed it is safe to conjecture it would not have been thus finally christened.

"The Pavilion on the Links" was written in Monterey; also, the essays on Thoreau and the Japanese reformer Yoshida Torajiro. "Prince Otto" was planned, to be completed much later,

CALIFORNIA



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WASHINGTON HOTEL, MONTEREY

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after he had returned to Europe, and he made copious notes for "The Old Pacific Capital."

What delighted Stevenson in Monterey was its climate, its situation, and its Old World flavor in this new land; "its pines and sand and distant hills, and a bay all filled with real water from the Pacific." Its small population he laughingly designated as "about that of a dissenting chapel on a wet Sunday in a strong Church neighborhood." And the people he said were "mostly Mexican and Indian — mixed."

It was here in this lovely village of Monterey, the air ever pervaded with the eternal roaring of the surf of the ocean, a background of pine-grown hills, the valley of the Carmel near by, and the old Mission church, Point Lobos, and rocks and inlets and cypresses, that Stevenson conceived a great love for the Pacific. Later it led him to turn his back forever on his inclement native land and spend all the last years of his

life on its bosom, rocked in small sea-going vessels, or on some of its tiny islands.

Stevenson's great friend in Monterey was Jules Simoneau, who kept the restaurant. He was a man of unusual intelligence, much of a philosopher, and, like all his countrymen, appreciative of beauty and art. No better adviser had the young art students that congregated in Monterey than he, and from none did they receive more wise and stimulating counsel. It happened in later days that Simoneau came to be a sort of oracle among the artists, and their sentimental interest in him was increased by his old friendship with Stevenson.

Simoneau missed Stevenson one day from the restaurant, and the next, and the third day. As he had said nothing about going out of town, Simoneau became alarmed. He went round to his rooms, but found the door locked. A handful of pebbles from the walk thrown against the panes brought Stevenson to the



JULES SIMONEAU
Of Monterey

window, but he showed the face of a very sick man.

Simoneau constituted himself sick-nurse at once. He tended Stevenson with great care, brought his meals to his room, and, knowing his shortness of money, opened his poor purse to him to the extent of all it contained.

Years afterward, when Stevenson was dead and Simoneau grown old, and the wine room and restaurant were closed, he and Madame became very poor, but they never considered selling their autographed Stevenson first editions, sent them by Stevenson from the different places he was afterward living in in Europe; nor Stevenson's letters, though they were offered more than once an amount that would have raised them above penury. Simoneau would not even allow their publication, saying, "They were not to the public, they were Louis's letters to me." But day by day Madame, in her neat calico dress, made Mexican *tamales*; and Simoneau, with flowing white beard

and in clean blue overalls, basket on arm, peddled them on the streets of Monterey.

Sadder days than these were yet in store for Simoneau. Madame died; Simoneau, through age, became too feeble to work. But lovers of Stevenson would not see the old man suffer or be forced to part with his books or letters, but gladly supplied his needs. To these friends he was fond of conversing about Stevenson, or "Louis," as he always spoke of him. To Robert C. Porter, whom he knew would respect his desire to keep it private during his lifetime, he presented a copy of the most remarkable of Stevenson's letters, which appears in another place in this volume, among others to his California friends.

The following is a letter from Simoneau to Mr. Porter:

MONTEREY,
March 20, 1899

MR. ROBERT CUSHMAN PORTER,
SAN FRANCISCO.

DEAR SIR, — Many thanks for your kind remembrances. I received both the photograph and the book.

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HAY AND PINE, MONTEREY

By Pittsburg Photo Co



I will never forget your praising appreciation of the old philosopher type. I am proud of it. If ever you come to Monterey, or if some of your friends of the same kind as yourself come to Monterey, do not forget the old man. He will be glad always to receive you or your friends. Those visits will carry me back twenty-five years and make me as many years younger. Hoping to see you again, I remain

Yours truly,

J. SIMONEAU

Best regards from my wife.

I had yesterday a letter from Miss ——— asking me the privilege of having the letters of Stevenson photographed for a firm of New York or from the east. The answer, as you think, has been a refusal on the ground that I do not want them published. After my death, maybe, my heirs will part with them. As for me, I esteem them at such price that no money can get them out of my hands, to have them given to the public. I want them for myself. A word from time to time from you will be always welcome.

J. S.

The illness in which he was nursed by Simoneau was a sad blow to Stevenson. His lungs were always weak. He had suffered more than once such attacks of prostration as he had on the Angora goat ranch in the Santa Lucia Mountains. But while living quietly in a mild climate, to start a pleuritic fever was a terrible disappointment. He felt, as he had not

done before, the certainty of death if he could not have rest and freedom from anxieties. He did not wish to die, for within himself he was conscious with what great talents he had been endowed, which in his mind carried with them great responsibilities. He was ambitious as well, if not selfishly so, and believed he was capable of better literary work than even his most intimate friends had imagined, if only health were given him. That he lived to verify his own judgment of himself, and that English literature was greatly enriched by his later volumes, is much due to the care Jules Simoneau gave him.

Monterey is a town of two or three streets, "economically paved with sea-sand," grass-grown and cut with gullies washed out by the rains. They are unlit save by beams from the house-windows. The houses for the most part are built of unbaked adobe brick, with walls so thick that they can scarcely be warmed through by the sun of summer.

Most of them have been there since Monterey was the capital of Upper California, and some even date back still farther to the founding of the Catholic Missions. The houses are Spanish in type and some are of very elegant proportions, with low, spacious, shapely rooms.

When Monterey was an American capital it was in the heyday of its glory. Dana has preserved for us a picture of that time in "Two Years Before the Mast." From one cause and another it declined in importance to being only the capital of a county and finally, by the loss of its charter and town lands, to a mere bankrupt village. The history of its families is parallel with its own. The descendants of its grandees are now poor and landless. Yet Monterey still preserves much of its ancient air and ancient customs which make a happy community and a delightful place of sojourn for visitors.

A few weeks and Stevenson was

acquainted with every past and present condition of the town, on familiar terms of friendship with the people, and as interested in their welfare as an old inhabitant. It was not in the sick-room nor at writing that he spent all his time. When he was well enough he was much abroad, visiting every nook and cranny of the old Pacific capital, the sandy beach of the bay, the ocean front that lay concealed round the ultimate point of the bay shore, and the inland dunes and forests.

The broad, white beach extends in one sweeping curve for miles to Santa Cruz. Along these sands was a walk of which Stevenson never tired. A too active mind, insatiate in its cravings, was not the least burden of his life. He gratefully seized on any sight or incident that held his attention and that also distracted his thoughts from his too sad broodings and loneliness. He found relief in watching the wild ducks, the sea-gulls hovering over the bay, the sand-pipers trotting in



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CUSTOM HOUSE, MONTEREY

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and out by troops after the retiring waves, and there was the strange sea tangle heaped upon the beach and the novel sight of bones of whales. Best of all for him was that part of the shore opposite where the Hotel del Monte now stands, but which in Stevenson's day was but sand-hills and live-oaks like the waste still outside its beautiful grounds. From this point he watched the long waves forever rolling in slowly toward the beach, vast and green, and curving their translucent necks until they burst with a surprising uproar and flattened themselves out, with white foam borders, high up the sand; but to be drawn back with hiss and rumble into the next incoming line of waves.

Westward from Monterey was a walk of another character. Among cliffs and granite boulders the breakers spouted and bellowed. There was a fishing village of Chinamen in a cove, farther on the Pacific Camp Grounds, now the town of Pacific Grove, set in a forest of pines,

and last of all Point Pinos with the lighthouse in a wilderness of sand. Where the bay met the Pacific there was an unending movement of the waters. Let the sun blaze overhead, and the air be without a breath, great rollers were forever running in along the external shore. On no other coast that he knew, Stevenson said, had he “enjoyed so much, in all weathers, such a spectacle of ocean’s greatness, such beauty of changing color, and so much thunder in the sound as at Monterey.”

For a change of walks he sometimes struck inland and explored the sand-hills and the lagoons. A rough undergrowth partially concealed the sand. Crouching, hardy live-oaks flourished singly or in thickets, — “the kind of woods for murderers to crawl among.” Several years later, when Stevenson was writing “Treasure Island,” he drew on Monterey scenery for his description of the island where doubloons of Flint and his pirate companions were buried. It was in just



A FOREST WALK MONTEREY

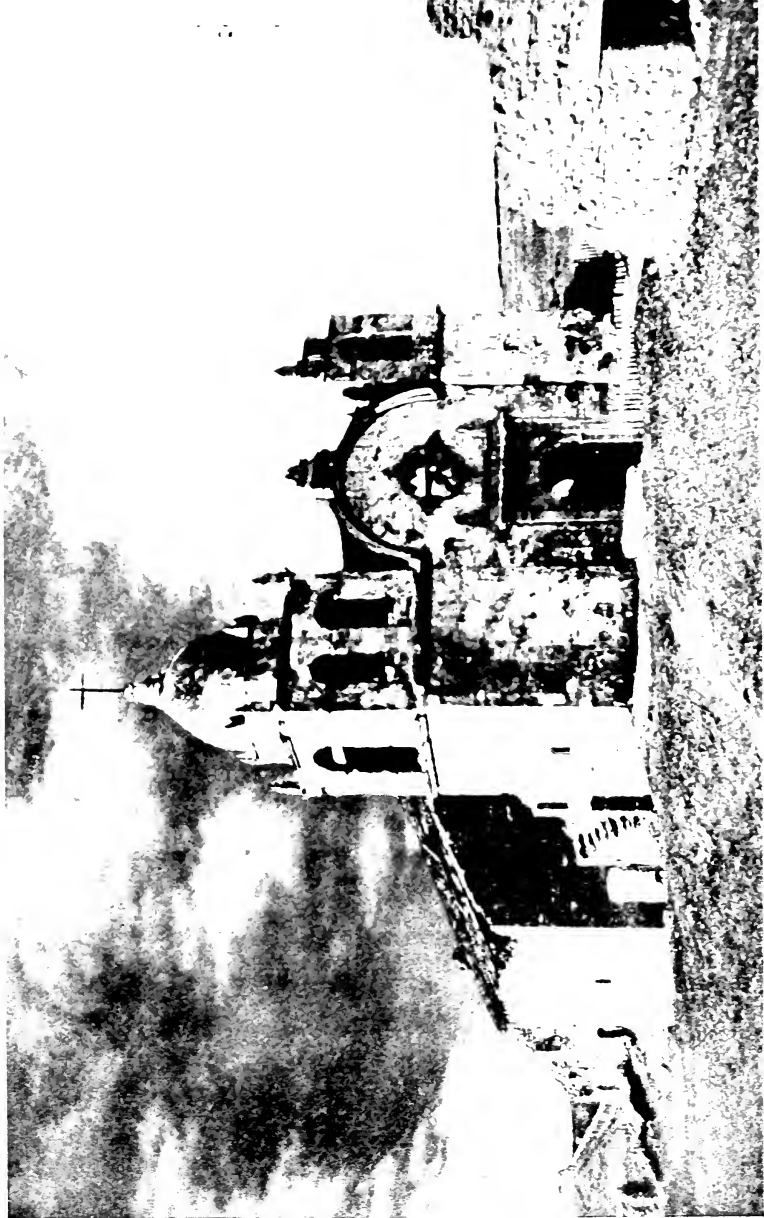
such a place as these sand-hills that Jim Hawkins found himself on leaving his mutinous shipmates whom he followed ashore. It was in just such a thicket of live-oaks, growing low along the sand like brambles, the boughs curiously twisted, the foliage compact like thatch, that he crawled and squatted when he heard the voices of the pirates near him and raised his head to an aperture among the leaves to see Long John Silver strike down with his crutch one of his mates who had refused to join in his plan of murder.

When Stevenson prolonged his tramps into the pine woods about Monterey he found it always difficult to turn homeward. Their emptiness gave him a sense of freedom and discovery. The long lanes paved with pine needles between the towering trunks lured him onward. The whole woodland was filled with the thundering surges of the sea which begirt it. "It set his senses on edge; he strained his attention; he walked listen-

ing like an Indian hunter; and that voice of the Pacific was a sort of disquieting company to him in his walk."

On the cliffs of the coast, blown upon by harsh wind from the sea, there grew the pitch-pines of singular shapes. Still more fantastic trees were the Monterey cypresses. "No words can give an idea of the contortions of their growth; they might figure without change in a circle of the nether hell as Dante pictured it."

One day Stevenson inadvertently set fire to the forest. A conflagration had been raging in another part of the woods and spread so rapidly that he wondered if it were the moss, that quaint funereal ornament of California forests, which so rapidly kindled. To test it, instead of plucking off a piece of moss from the tree, he touched a match to an attached tassel. In a moment the tree was a roaring pillar of flames. Not far off he could hear the shouts of men who were combating the original fire. He knew that there was only one thing for him to



do, and that was to escape before he was discovered, and he ran as he had never run in his life before.

The California that was before the days of the discovery of gold and the coming of people from the Eastern States is best exemplified in the Indians of Carmel. Hither came the Franciscan friars and established one of their most flourishing missions in a fertile valley a few miles from Monterey. A great church was built where the Indians gathered for Christian services. But the mission has ceased to exist, the Indians are decimated and scattered, and the old church a ruin. At the time that Stevenson visited it, it was roofless, and sea breezes, and sea-fog, and the alternation of rain and sunshine bade fair to widen the breaches in the walls until they should be levelled. Fortunately the church has not been allowed to become a complete ruin, but of late years has been restored.

One day in the year mass is still cele-

brated at its ancient altar. Stevenson was present at one of these annual services. The *padre* drove over the hill from Monterey. Only the sacristy at that time was covered and it was filled with seats and decorated for the service. The few descendants of that once great band of Carmel Indians, their bright dresses contrasting with their dark, melancholy faces, were there gathered together with a crowd of unsympathetic holiday makers that by contrast gave the last touch of pathos to the event. An old white-haired Indian, stone-blind, conducted the singing. Other Indians composed the choir. They knew perfectly the Gregorian music and pronounced the Latin correctly. The faces of the singers lit up with joy as the music continued. It made a man's heart sorry for the good fathers of yore who had taught the Indians to dig and to reap, to read and to sing, who had given them European mass-books which they still preserve and study in their cottages,



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WAVES ON MONTEREY COAST

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and who have now passed away from all authority and influence in that land — to be succeeded by greedy land thieves, and even their graves hard by the church to be desecrated and the headstones to serve for targets for sacrilegious pistol shots.

Nearly four months Stevenson remained in Monterey. The first month of this time Mrs. Osbourne, with her daughter and son and her sister, was occupying a picturesque old adobe on the main street, set deep in a garden having the famous rose tree which is pointed out to all visitors. It was the home of Señorita Bonifaccio, admired of General Sherman during his historic stay in the old Pacific capital, and their romance is told and retold to this day. Later, Mrs. Osbourne and her family returned to their home in East Oakland.

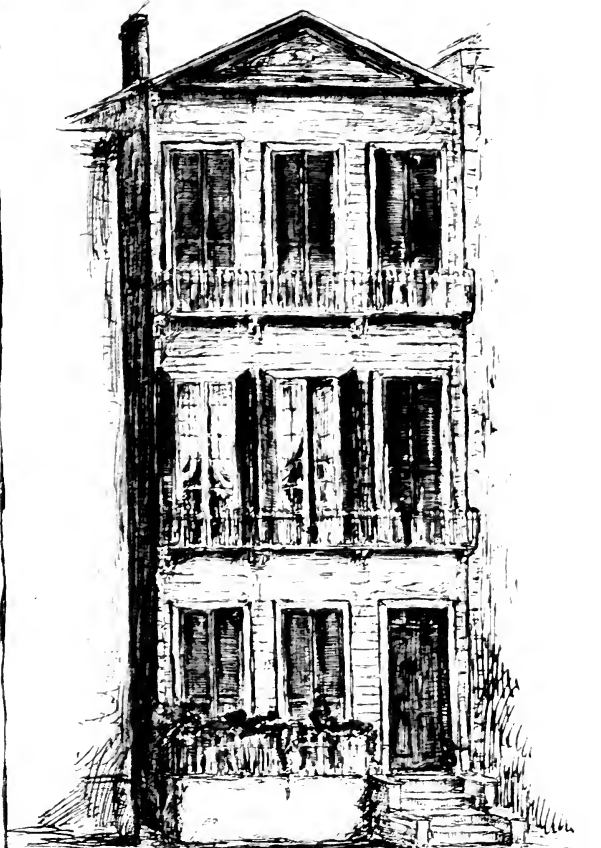
While the Osbournes were in Monterey the marriage of Mrs. Osbourne's daughter

to Joe Strong, a painter, had taken place.

It was of Mr. Strong, when later at Silverado he joined the Squatters, that Stevenson said, "A most good-natured comrade and a capital hand at an omelette. I do not know in which capacity he was most valued — as a cook or a companion, and he did excellently well in both."

A few days before Christmas, 1879, Stevenson moved to San Francisco.

Looking for a room he walked up Bush Street till he came to No. 608, where there was a sign in the window announcing furnished rooms to let. It was in the days when people lived farther down town than they do at present. The house was an old one and showed its dilapidation. It had been a two-story cottage, brought round the Horn. This part had been raised and a new story inserted underneath. There were French windows and green outside slat blinds.



THE CARSONS' HOUSE
No. 608 Bush Street, San Francisco

What interested Stevenson more than all else was that the house faced south, and that there were balconies to the windows, running the width of the front, on all three floors. Air and sunshine, the two great *desiderata* for his health's sake, were to be found here. His ring brought to the door the landlady herself, Mrs. Mary Carson.

If Stevenson eyed her with questioning glances, no less suspiciously did she eye this new applicant for a room. She had just gone through an unhappy experience with two London Germans, who had departed leaving several months' room rent unpaid; and she saw at once that Stevenson was also a foreigner. His manner and voice proclaimed it. More than that, to use her own words, "He was such a strange-looking, shabby shack of a fellow. Not that there was anything repellent in his looks, only his appearance was not what his acquaintance bore. For when I came to know him, I just loved him like my own child."

His garb was in itself a disguise, as his clothing generally was. The secret of his dressing poorly, as he always did, was, first, his preoccupation in his art, and, second, because the money with which he might have bought himself better clothes always went to unfortunate friends whom he thought in more need of it. Only the necessary and useful much concerned him, and resulted rather nondescriptly occasionally. In Monterey he was one chilly morning in need of little heavier clothing than he had on. A coat was deemed too much; a jersey would have answered the purpose. Lacking it he pulled an extra undershirt on over the outside. Mrs. Carson describes his dress the day he came to her house seeking lodgings thus: "He wore a little brown rough ulster buttoned up tight under his chin, and Scotch brogues, the walking kind, laced up high, and his pants stuck in the tops, and a dicer hat." Y

He was tall and thin naturally, and emaciated by illness. His hair was light

brown and down on his neck; his complexion olive but rich-tinted, for he never lost his color even in sickness; and his lips were full and red. His manners and gestures were like those of Latin people.

Stevenson looked at the room to be rented. It was the southwest corner one on the second floor. It and a hall bedroom occupied the whole front. The larger room contained a bed, a table, a dresser, and two chairs; and there was an open fireplace. "Here is all there is of it," honestly exclaimed Mrs. Carson, on throwing the door open. Stevenson liked a bare room to work in. He remarked on the fireplace and the price and went away. Not long afterward he returned, closed a bargain with Mrs. Carson for the room, and with two grips moved in the same day.

This house and one at No. 7 Montgomery Avenue, where, after his marriage, he and his wife went for a few days before moving to Mount Saint Helena, and the

old Occidental Hotel, where Stevenson stayed on his return eight years later to ship from this port for the South Seas, were the only houses Stevenson ever lived in in San Francisco.

A certain house in San Francisco, called Stevenson's, was not his; in fact was not built until many years after his being there and even some time after his death. More than that, he never visited even the site on which that house stands.

Seekers after literary landmarks will find nothing remaining in San Francisco connected with Stevenson, other than localities. The old house at No. 608 Bush Street was torn down long before the great fire. When Stevenson returned the second time, and he and his mother climbed the Bush Street hill in search of Mrs. Carson, they found the old house gone and a new one erected in its place. The Montgomery Avenue house and the Occidental Hotel and the restaurants in which he ate are all gone; all were



MRS. MARY CARSON, WITH STEVENSON'S
STEP-GRANDCHILDREN

swept away in the conflagration of 1906.

Of all the landmarks in San Francisco Portsmouth Square is the one most nearly connected with Stevenson. It is in the midst of the part of the city Stevenson found most interesting and which he portrayed in "The Wrecker," and it was here he often came to sit on the benches and watch the strange humanity that drifted thither. And it is in Portsmouth Square where his monument is, which Mr. Bruce Porter and some other citizens of San Francisco set up to his memory, the first to be erected anywhere.

Mrs. Carson still retains a most vivid remembrance of her lodger; of his happy presence in the house — although he was inwardly in sore distress, for he spoke years afterward of that time as being the saddest hours of his life.

/He spent most of his time in his room, generally writing. But he liked well to have his landlord or landlady come in to

have a talk with him. He was ready always to draw them out in conversation, and listened attentively, regarding them closely with his keen dark eyes all the while. In his hours of despondency Mrs. Carson's gay Irish ways and wit buoyed his spirits, and his heart responded to her many kindnesses: the fire she lit for him in his grate, the motherly little visits she paid him in his room when he was ill, the hot foot-baths, her tucking the blankets and the counterpane about him when, as was his usual way while writing, he lay in bed, his head bolstered up with pillows, and his knees drawn up for a book-rest.

His sympathies always drew the deepest life stories from his friends, and it was not unnatural that when Mrs. Carson received a letter from an old flame of youthful days, it was carried to Stevenson. His refusal to her request that he write an answer (being an author and competent to compose it better than she) was made with the explanation

that he was sure the writer would a hundredfold rather have one written by herself than the most eloquently worded epistle by another.

Mrs. Carson, speaking of Stevenson's ready indignation, says he was "that quick" but equally ready to apologize. His concern regarding the ruling passion of the Carsons, to gamble away on mining stocks all their savings, was like his desire always to help all those he met exactly in the way they needed it most. Stevenson said to Mrs. Carson on their memorable last meeting, "I hope you do not waste your money on the stocks." "Stars, no, no!" replied Mrs. Carson. "No, I never buy mining stocks any more. I cannot, I have no more money. The stocks has got it all." Such were his sympathy and distress and his labor in helping with the nursing when the Carson baby fell dangerously ill that it brought a new fit of illness on himself. To the Carsons with his usual frankness he told much of his own experiences, and

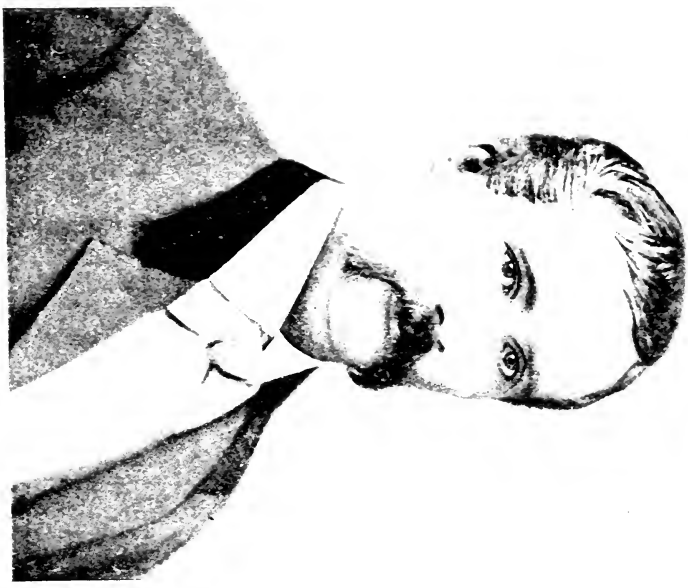
took them into his confidence about his approaching marriage.

When Stevenson returned to San Francisco, of the family of four (Mrs. and Mr. Carson and their two little sons), only Mrs. Carson and Robbie, the one who had been the sick baby, were left. Not finding her at the old house, where he had gone at first to see her, and lacking strength to hunt farther, he sent her a letter to come to the Occidental Hotel. On the evening appointed, word was left in the office that she alone was to be shown up to Stevenson's room. When she entered, Stevenson from his bed held out his arms to her and drew her to him and kissed her "for auld lang syne."

Not long since, in telling some one of Stevenson's life at her house, Mrs. Carson concluded: "I remember one morning papa's coming home, and he had a newspaper in his hand, and he said, 'Well, your author's dead.' I had a picture of him he had sent me, enlarged and hung in the parlor; but I could n't think of



THE GARSON CHILDREN



MR. GARSON

anything when the big fire came, and somehow I left that and the silk sock of the author's he threw away in my house and that I had always kept my money in when I had some, and all the things I had cut out of the papers about him when he got famous, and they all burned. And do you know, there is something nice in all artists?"

Stevenson's wonderful gift for friendship brought out the ready response we have seen in Simoneau and Mrs. Carson and other true hearts and warm and kindly natures like his own. But for any act of kindness or a favor received he repaid, when possible, a hundredfold. He was most generous with his money, and could never say no to a beggar. Importunate friends were helped to the extent of every cent he possessed. After he became famous and made with his writing twenty to twenty-five thousand dollars a year, little was spent on himself, but all went, just as his monthly allowance from his father had gone, to

his friends who happened to want it. With human nature what it is, it is not surprising that there were those who benefited by Stevenson's generosity when they stood in less need than he himself. And it is a sad fact that one in very easy circumstances, in England, owed Stevenson the most part of a considerable sum of money his father gave him on coming of age, while he was sick and almost penniless thousands of miles from home. Stevenson was not the man to ask for it. But this was one of the features of his life that sadly made him liken himself to Cervantes' hero, and yet also brought out one of his famous proverbs: "Greatheart was deceived. 'Very well,' said Greatheart." This was really the summing up of his own life experiences and disillusion.

The famous letter in "Across the Plains," "not written," as Stevenson said, "by Homer but by a boy of eleven," to "My Dear Sister Mary," and describing his and his brother's attempt, before

the days of railroads, by ox team to go from Missouri to California, he got in San Francisco. Two of the boys reached "the good country," but one was slain by Indians on the plains. This letter was written by Martin Mahoney to his sister, afterward Mrs. Carson. It deeply interested Stevenson, who had so lately come the same journey but in the more comfortable way of travel, by train, and yet the hardships of which journey had been almost more than his strength. When Mrs. Carson one day gave Stevenson the letter, then twenty years old, to read, he took it to his room. Several days afterward he returned the letter to her but without comment. He was at the time writing "Across the Plains," in her humble upstairs front bedroom. After Stevenson had returned to Europe, one day the mail brought Mrs. Carson a copy of the completed volume and she beheld her precious letter, and the memory of her little brother who had escaped death at the hands of wild

Indians on the plains, only to find an unknown and unmarked grave in the new country, there immortalized. Martin Mahoney's body lies in the potter's field of Laurel Hill Cemetery on Lone Mountain, but his memory is as wide as the English-speaking world.

While he lived in San Francisco, ill health and consequent hindrance in his writing brought Stevenson's purse to a low ebb. He could afford to go for his meals only to cheap restaurants. He got a ten-cent breakfast at a coffee-house on Sixth Street south of Market; for his dinner, which he took in the middle of the day, he went to Donadieu's restaurant on Bush Street, between Dupont and Kearney; and for his supper he returned to the Sixth Street coffee-house. Needing later to reduce still further his expenses, he permitted himself but two meals, to bring his daily expenses to a forty-five-cent limit, and to the complete destruction of his health.

It was when Mrs. Carson observed that



ROBERT LOUISE STEVENSON



ROBERT LOUISE STEVENSON

he did not go out to a meal, that a tray from her own kitchen was carried by herself to his room, with almost an apology: she wished him to taste her good soda biscuits, her coffee, or a chop. And when his room rent fell due and there was delay in payment, it never troubled her good heart. Stevenson spoke only too truly when he called her "the rose that had blossomed and bloomed under the bush."

If to him his writing seemed to lag, the list does not appear a short one for three months' work. Much that was begun in Monterey was polished off and brought to a conclusion. Some useless work was put on "The Vendetta" before the whole was entirely abandoned. "Across the Plains" was mostly written at Mrs. Carson's. "The Amateur Emigrant" was finished and posted from there.

Of this time of Stevenson's life we have his own description in the letters with which we are familiar, in the "Letters to His Family and Friends." Only that to Professor Meiklejohn of St. Andrew's

University in Scotland was not included. In spite of what is said in his letter to Professor Meiklejohn about seeking relief in works of adventure, there was a book of an entirely different kind that Stevenson kept constantly with him, carrying it about in his pocket in San Francisco street-cars and ferry-boats when he was full of unhappiness and anxieties and sick unto death, finding it at all times and places a peaceful and sweet companion. It was Penn's "Fruits of Solitude," printed in Philadelphia.

The next winter, after he had returned to Europe and was at Davos, a health resort in Switzerland, he passed the volume on to Horatio F. Brown, not without some regret at parting with it.

Professor Meiklejohn had just read his Burns and being greatly pleased with it wrote to tell Stevenson so. His cheering words were a god-send to Stevenson, not solely for its own sake, and because it confirmed his own estimate of his essay: "Burns, I believe, in my own mind, is



ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
A Picture Never Before Published

one of my high water marks," but it came at a time when he was sorely in need of encouragement and a pleasant word. His other literary friends had seen fit to fill their letters with criticisms and warnings which were the last things poor Stevenson wanted while sick and anxious and on the verge of collapse. In his reply Stevenson wrote: ~~X~~ "When I suffer in mind, stories are my refuge; I take them like opium, and I consider one who writes them as a sort of doctor of the mind; and frankly, Meiklejohn, it is not Shakespeare we take to when we are in a hot corner; nor, certainly, George Eliot, — no, not even Balzac. It is Charles Reade, or old Dumas, or the 'Arabian Nights,' or the best of Walter Scott: it is stories we want, not the high poetic function which represents the world; (we are then like the Asiatic with his *improvisatore*, or the Middle Ages with the *trouvère*.) We want incident, interest, action; to the devil with your philosophy. So I, when I

am ready to go beside myself, stick my head into a book, as the ostrich with her bush: let fate and fortune meantime belabor my posteriors as they will."

The secret of much of Stevenson's misery while he was living at Mrs. Carson's Stevenson reveals farther on in his letter to Professor Meiklejohn: "When I may return is a great mystery. I am going to be married first, at least; but I suppose you had better not talk of it too much just yet, for my parents are very much opposed. This will give you a clue to some of my troubles."



APPROACH TO SAN FRANCISCO



THE NARROWS, SAN FRANCISCO

The following is a description by Stevenson of the city of San Francisco, contributed to the *London Magazine of Art*, and written at Davos, February 18, 1882:

SAN FRANCISCO

A MODERN COSMOPOLIS

“THE Pacific coast of the United States, as you may see by the map, and still better in that admirable book, ‘Two Years Before the Mast,’ by Dana, is one of the most exposed and shelterless on earth. The trade-wind blows fresh; the huge Pacific swell booms along degree after degree of an unbroken line of coast. South of the joint firth of the Columbia and Willamette, there flows in no considerable river; south of Puget Sound there is no protected inlet of the ocean. Along the whole seaboard of California there are but two unexceptionable anchorages, the bight of the Bay of Monterey, and the inland sea that takes its name from San Francisco.

“Whether or not it was here that Drake put in, in 1597, we cannot tell. There is no other place so suitable; and yet the narrative of Francis Pretty scarcely seems to suit the features of the scene. Viewed from seaward, the Golden Gate should give no very English impression to justify the name of a New Albion. On the west, the deep lies open; nothing near but the still vexed Farallones. The coast is rough and barren. Tamalpais, a mountain of a memorable figure, springing direct from the sea-level, over-plumbs the narrow entrance from the north. On the south, the loud music of the Pacific sounds along beaches and cliffs, and among broken reefs, the sporting place of the sea-lion. Dismal, shifting sand-hills, wrinkled by the wind, appear behind. Perhaps, too, in the days of Drake, Tamalpais would be clothed to its peak with the majestic redwoods.

“Within the memory of persons not yet old, a mariner might have steered into these narrows (not yet the Golden

Gate), opened out the surface of the bay, — here girt with hills, there lying broad to the horizon, — and beheld a scene as empty of the presence, as pure from the handiworks of man, as in the days of our old sea commander. A Spanish mission, fort, and church took the place of those ‘houses of the people’ of the country’ which were seen by Pretty, ‘close to the water-side.’ All else would be unchanged. Now, a generation later, a great city covers the sand-hills on the west, a growing town lies along the muddy shallows of the east; steamboats pant continually between them from before sunrise till the small hours of the morning; lines of great sea-going ships lie ranged at anchor; colors fly upon the islands; and from all around, the hum of corporate life, of beaten bells, and steam, and running carriages, goes cheerily abroad in the sunshine. Choose a place on one of the huge throbbing ferry-boats, and, when you are midway between the city and the suburb, look

around. The air is fresh and salt, as if you were at sea. On the one hand is Oakland, gleaming white among its gardens. On the other, to seaward, hill after hill is crowded and crowned with the palaces of San Francisco; its long streets lie in regular bars of darkness, east and west, across the sparkling picture; a forest of masts bristles like bulrushes about its feet. Nothing remains of the days of Drake but the faithful trade-wind scattering the smoke, the fogs that will begin to muster about sundown, and the fine bulk of Tamalpais looking down on San Francisco, like Arthur's Seat on Edinburgh.

“Thus in the course of a generation only, this city and its suburbs have arisen. Men are alive by the score who have hunted all over the foundations in a dreary waste. I have dined, near the ‘punctual centre’ of San Francisco, with a gentleman (then newly married) who told me of his former pleasures, wading with his fowling-piece in sand and scrub,

on the site of the house where we were dining. In this busy, moving generation, we have all known cities to cover our boyish playgrounds, we have all started for a country walk and stumbled on a new suburb; but I wonder what enchantment of the 'Arabian Nights' can have equalled this evocation of a roaring city, in a few years of a man's life, from the marshes and the blowing sand. Such swiftness of increase, as with an overgrown youth, suggests a corresponding swiftness of destruction. The sandy peninsula of San Francisco, mirroring itself on one side in the bay, beaten on the other by the surge of the Pacific, and shaken to the heart by frequent earthquakes, seems in itself no very durable foundation. According to Indian tales, perhaps older than the name of California, it once rose out of the sea in a moment, and some time or other shall, in a moment, sink again. No Indian, they say, cares to linger on that dreadful land. 'The earth hath bubbles as the

water has, and this is of them.' Here, indeed, all is new, nature as well as towns. The very hills of California have an unfinished look; the rains and the streams have not yet carved them to their perfect shape. The forests spring like mushrooms from the unexhausted soil; and they are mown down yearly by forest fires. We are in early geological epochs, changeful and insecure; and we feel, as with a sculptor's model, that the author may yet grow weary of, and shatter, the rough sketch.

"Fancy apart, San Francisco is a city beleaguered with alarms. The lower parts, along the bay side, sit on piles; old wrecks decaying, fish dwelling unsunned, beneath the populous houses; and a trifling subsidence might drown the business quarters in an hour. Earthquakes are not uncommon, they are sometimes threatening in their violence; the fear of them grows yearly on a resident; he begins with indifference, ends in sheer panic; and no one feels safe in

any but a wooden house. Hence it comes that, in that rainless clime, the whole city is built of timber — a wood-yard of unusual extent and complication; that fires spring up readily, and, served by the unwearying trade-wind, swiftly spread; that all over the city there are fire-signal boxes; that the sound of the bell, telling the number of the threatened ward, is soon familiar to the ear; and that nowhere else in the world is the art of the fireman carried to so nice a point.

“Next, perhaps, in order of strangeness to the speed of its appearance, is the mingling of the races that combine to people it. The town is essentially not Anglo-Saxon; still more essentially not American. The Yankee and the Englishman find themselves alike in a strange country. There are none of those touches — not of nature, and I dare scarcely say of art — by which the Anglo-Saxon feels himself at home in so great a diversity of lands. Here, on the contrary, are airs of Marseilles and of Pekin.

The shops along the street are like the consulates of different nations. The passers-by vary in feature like the slides of a magic lantern. For we are here in that city of gold to which adventurers congregated out of all the winds of heaven; we are in a land that till the other day was ruled and peopled by the countrymen of Cortes; and the sea that laves the piers of San Francisco is the ocean of the East and of the isles of summer. There goes the Mexican, unmistakable; there the blue-clad Chinaman with his white slippers; there the soft-spoken, brown Kanaka, or perhaps a waif from far-away Malaya. You hear French, German, Italian, Spanish, and English indifferently. You taste the food of all nations in the various restaurants; passing from a French *prix-fixe*, where every one is French, to a roaring German ordinary, where every one is German; ending, perhaps, in a cool and silent Chinese tea-house. For every man, for every race and nation, that city

is a foreign city, humming with foreign tongues and customs; and yet each and all have made themselves at home. The Germans have a German theatre and innumerable beer gardens. The French Fall of the Bastille is celebrated with squibs and banners and marching patriots, as noisily as the American Fourth of July. The Italians have their dear domestic quarter, with Italian caricatures in the windows, Chianti and *polenta* in the taverns. The Chinese are settled as in China. The goods they offer for sale are as foreign as the lettering on the sign board of the shop: dried fish from the China seas; pale cakes and sweetmeats, the like, perhaps, once eaten by Badroulboudour; nuts of unfriendly shape; ambiguous, outlandish vegetables — misshapen, lean, or bulbous — telling of a country where the trees are not as our trees, and the very back garden is a cabinet of curiosities. The joss house is hard by, heavy with incense, packed with quaint carvings and the parapher-

nalía of a foreign ceremonial. All these you behold, crowded together in the narrower arteries of the city, cool, sunless, a little mouldy, with the high, musical sing-song of that alien language in your ears. Yet the houses are of Occidental build; the lines of a hundred telegraphs pass, thick as a ship's rigging, overhead, a kite hanging among them, perhaps, or perhaps two — one European, one Chinese in shape and color. Mercantile Jack, the Italian fisher, the Dutch merchant, the Mexican vaquero, go hustling by. At the sunny end of the street, a thoroughfare roars with European traffic; and meanwhile, high and clear, outbreaks, perhaps, the San Francisco fire alarm, and people pause to count the strokes and in the stations of the double fire service you know that the electric bells are ringing, the traps opening and clapping to, and the engine, manned and harnessed, being whisked into the street, before the sound of the alarm has ceased to vibrate on your ear. Of all romantic places for

a boy to loiter in, that Chinese quarter is the most romantic. There, on a half-holiday, three doors from home, he may visit an actual foreign land, foreign in people, language, things, and customs. The very barber of the 'Arabian Nights' shall be at work before him, shaving heads; he shall see Aladdin playing on the streets; who knows, but among those nameless vegetables, the fruit of the rose tree itself may be exposed for sale? And the interest is heightened with a chill of horror. Below, you hear, the cellars are alive with mystery; opium dens, where the smokers lie above one another, shelf above shelf, close-packed and grovelling in deadly stupor; the seats of unknown vices and cruelties, the prisons of unacknowledged slaves, and the secret lazarettoes of disease.

"With all this mass of nationalities, crime is common. Amid such a competition of respectabilities, the moral sense is confused; in this camp of gold-seekers, speech is loud and the hand is ready.

There are rough quarters where it is dangerous o' nights; cellars of public entertainment which the wary pleasure-seeker chooses to avoid. Concealed weapons are unlawful, but the law is continually broken. One editor was shot dead while I was there; another walked the streets accompanied by a *bravo*, his guardian angel. I have been quietly eating a dish of oysters in a restaurant, where, not more than ten minutes after I had left, shots were exchanged and took effect; and one night, about ten o'clock, I saw a man standing watchfully at a street corner with a long Smith-and-Wesson glittering in his hand behind his back. Somebody had done something he should not, and was being looked for with a vengeance. It is odd, too, that the seat of the last vigilance committee I know of — a mediæval *Fehmgericht* — was none other than the Palace Hotel, the world's greatest *caravanserai*, served by lifts and lit with electricity; where, in the great glazed court, a band nightly





discourses music from a grove of palms. So do extremes meet in this city of contrasts: extremes of wealth and poverty, apathy and excitement, the conveniences of civilization, and the red justice of Judge Lynch. The streets lie straight up and down the hills and straight across at right angles, these in the sun, those in the shadow, a trenchant pattern of gloom and glare; and what with the crisp illumination, the sea air singing in your ears, the chill and glitter, the changing aspects both of things and people, the fresh sights at every corner of your walk — sights of the bay, of Tamalpais, of steep, descending streets, of the outspread city — whiffs of alien speech, sailors singing on shipboard, Chinese coolies toiling on the shore, crowds brawling all day in the street before the Stock Exchange — one brief impression follows another, and the city leaves upon the mind no general and stable picture, but a profusion of airy and incongruous images, of the sea and

shore, the East and West, the summer and the winter.

X “In the better parts of this most interesting city there is apt to be a touch of the commonplace. It is in the slums and suburbs that the city dilettante finds his game, and there is nothing more characteristic and original than the outlying quarters of San Francisco. The Chinese district is the most famous; but it is far from the only truffle in the pie. There is many another dingy corner, many a young antiquity, many a terrain vague with that stamp of quaintness that a city-lover seeks and dwells on; and the indefinite prolongation of its streets, up hill and down vale, makes San Francisco a place apart. The same street in its career visits and unites so many different classes of society, here echoing with drays, there lying decorously silent between the mansions of bonanza millionaires, to founder at last among the drifting sands beside Lone Mountain cemetery, or die out among the sheds and lumber of the

north. Thus you may be struck with a spot, set it down for the most romantic in the city, and, glancing at the name plate, find it is on the same street that you yourself inhabit in another quarter of the town.

“The great net of straight thoroughfares lying at right angles, east and west and north and south, over the shoulders of Nob Hill, the hill of palaces, must certainly be counted the best part of San Francisco. It is there that the millionaires are gathered together, vying with each other in display; looking down upon the business wards of the city. That is California Street. Far away down you may pick out a building with a little belfry; and that is the Stock Exchange, the heart of San Francisco: a great pump we might call it, continually pumping up the savings of the lower quarters into the pockets of the millionaires upon the hill. But these same thoroughfares that enjoy for a while so elegant a destiny have their lines prolonged into more

unpleasant places. Some meet their fate in the sands; some must take a cruise in the ill-famed China quarters; some run into the sea; some perish unwept among pig sties and rubbish heaps.

“Nob Hill comes, of right, in the place of honor; but the two other hills of San Francisco are more entertaining to explore. On both there are a world of old wooden houses snoozing away all forgotten. Some are of the quaintest design, others only romantic by neglect and age; some are curiously painted; and I have seen one at least with ancient carvings panelled in its wall. Surely they are not of California building, but far voyagers from round the stormy Horn, like those who sent for them and dwelt in them at first. Brought to be the favorites of the wealthy, they have sunk into these poor, forgotten districts, where, like old town toasts, they keep each other silent countenance. - Telegraph Hill and Rincon Hill, these are the dozing quarters that I recommend to the city



TAMALPAIS



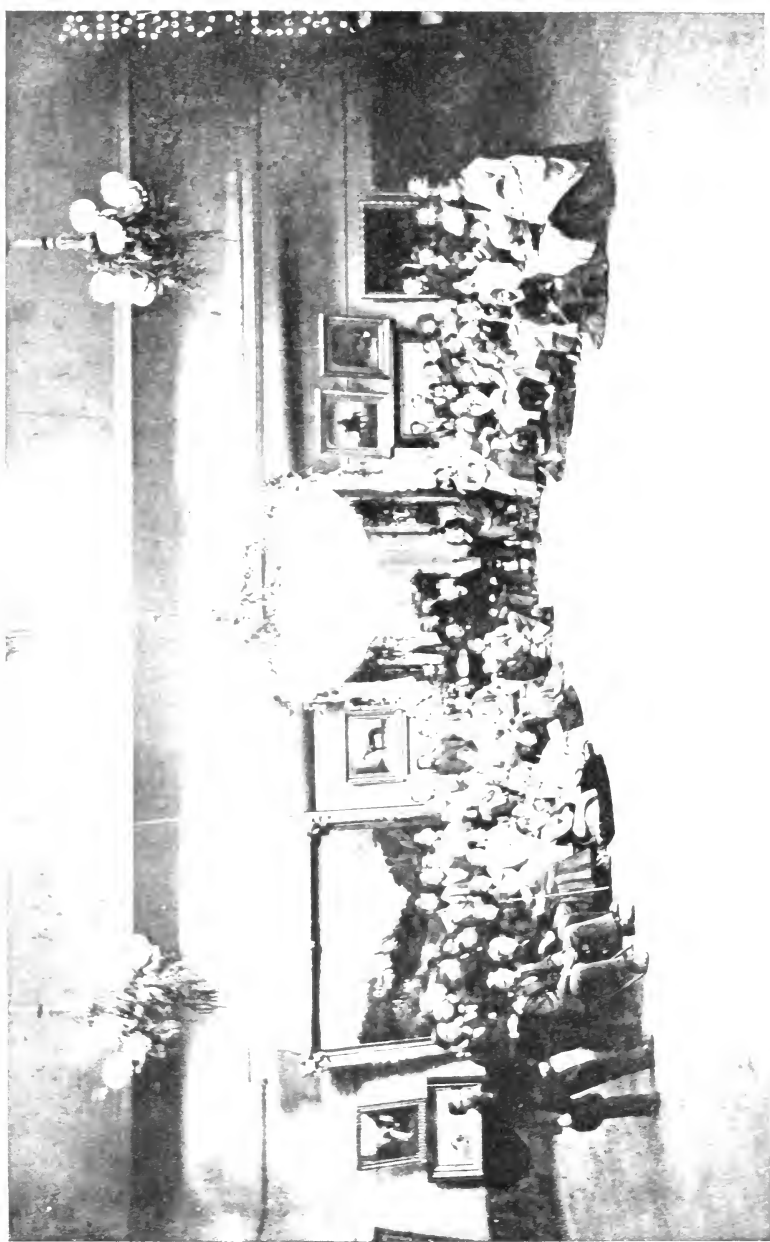
ANOTHER VIEW OF TAMALPAIS



dilettante. There stand these forgotten houses, enjoying the unbroken sun and quiet. There, if there were such an author, would the San Francisco Fortuné de Boisgobey pitch the first chapter of his mystery. But the first is the quainter of the two. Visited under the broad natural daylight, and with the relief and accent of reality, these scenes have a quality of dream-land and of the best pages of Dickens. Telegraph Hill, besides, commands a noble view; and as it stands at the turn of the Bay, its skirts are all water-side, and round from North Reach to the Bay Front you can follow doubtful paths from one quaint corner to another. Everywhere the same tumble-down decay and sloppy progress, new things yet unmade, old things tottering to their fall; everywhere the same out-at-elbows, many-nationed loungers at dim, irregular grog-shops; everywhere the same sea-air and isleted sea prospect; and for a last and more romantic note, you have on the one hand Tamalpais

standing high in the blue air, and on the other the tail of that long alignment of three-masted, full-rigged, deep-sea ships that make a forest of spars along the eastern front of San Francisco. In no other port is such a navy congregated. For the coast trade is so trifling, and the ocean trade from round the Horn so large, that the smaller ships are swallowed up and can do nothing to confuse the majestic order of these merchant princes. In an age when the ship of the line is already a thing of the past, and we can never hope to go coasting in a cockboat between the 'wooden walls' of a squadron at anchor, there is perhaps no place on earth where the power and beauty of sea architecture can be so perfectly enjoyed as in this bay."

Stevenson met not a great many people in San Francisco, but some of the dearest friendships of his life were formed here. First must come the Williamses: Virgil Williams, the painter and the founder of



the California School of Art, and its director for thirteen years — until his death; and his wife, Dora Norton Williams. These two had long been friends of the Osbournes, and Mrs. Osbourne and her children had been pupils in drawing in the Art School, before their going to Europe, where they met Stevenson. Mr. and Mrs. Williams, when Stevenson came to San Francisco, were living in the old Supreme Court building on Montgomery Street, at that time transformed into studios and living-rooms for artists.

Mrs. Williams was ill and alone one afternoon, when Mrs. Osbourne brought Stevenson with her to pay a visit. At first Stevenson made not much of an impression. Mrs. Williams observed that he was tall and thin and in disarray, and had fine eyes and carried his figure well. He was silent and left most of the conversation to the ladies. Next day Stevenson came again to get what he called his gum coat, which he had for-

gotten when he went away the day before. The two got into a pleasant animated discussion and he remained some time. Stevenson shone best always in talk; and those who knew him declare that his written works, wonderful as they are, are not the equal of his conversation, when "all the many lights and colors of his richly compounded spirit could be seen in full play." He had a peculiarly beautiful voice, with a rich, round, but not provincial, Scotch accent. While he conversed with Mrs. Williams, he paced up and down the floor in his usual fashion, with rapid and graceful motion, or hung on the mantel-piece. It was not strange that the conversation turned on the subject of the relations of America and Great Britain.

Stevenson regretted that England had lost the Colonies. He pictured the States under British rule, with America the seat of government of the whole empire. He dwelt upon the benefits that would have accrued to the whole English-speaking

race from such a union, and to all mankind, with Great Britain and America ruling the world for peace and righteousness. In a flight of fancy, and with all the richness of language that was his, he pictured the actual transporting of the royal family and all the paraphernalia of government across the Atlantic, the pageantry of the ships and the gorgeous landing, and the setting up of the throne at Washington.

While Stevenson was talking, Mr. Williams came in. He looked doubtfully from Mrs. Williams to the stranger; for, as he told his wife afterwards, he thought a tramp had got in and she could not get him out again. But it was only for a moment, and soon the two men were talking with all the interest and pleasure of those who feel much in common, and from that day began a friendship between the two that never ended until the death of Virgil Williams.

Mrs. Williams recalls a very characteristic incident in Stevenson's stay in San

Francisco. A jaunt to the Golden Gate Park had been planned by the Williamses and Stevenson, but when the day arrived it was bleak and damp, a day of fog and wind. The Williamses would have been glad to forego the little excursion; but Stevenson appeared to wish it, and with not much anticipation of pleasure they joined Stevenson.

At once his spirits seemed to rise. He was talkative, sportive, gay. The weather was forgotten, both the cold and the wet; a holiday spirit was kindled in all their veins by Stevenson. They spent the afternoon walking along the paths and through the trees and bushes, and returned at evening for a dinner at a down-town restaurant. And so pleasant did the time seem that it remained a red-letter day in Mrs. Williams's memory; and yet all the gayety was made by Stevenson, and at the very time when his heart was heavy.

During the time that Stevenson lived in Mrs. Carson's room, the Williamses

moved to Taylor Street, near Geary. It is this house that Stevenson refers to in his letter to Virgil Williams from Bourne-mouth, given farther on.

Virgil Williams introduced Stevenson at the Bohemian Club, then occupying rooms over the old California Market, at No. 430 Pine Street, and on the same floor with the Art School. Here Stevenson was afterward wont to go to sit and read or talk with some of the members. But he is remembered most at the Club as a reserved, melancholy-looking figure poring over a book. There were three other members of the Club besides Williams for whom Stevenson conceived a warm regard. These were Judge Rearden and Judge John Boalt, of the latter of whom Stevenson said that he was the finest type of American gentleman that he had met, and Charles Warren Stoddard, professor and author, who was most instrumental in inducing Stevenson, a number of years later, to embark for the South Seas.

Much as Stevenson admired Judge Boalt, there seems never to have been any correspondence between them by letter after Stevenson left San Francisco. But Stevenson and Stoddard continued their intimacy by writing and exchange of books and by occasional meetings.

In "The Wrecker," the chapter on "Faces on the City Front" is a description of the place on Telegraph Hill where Stevenson first visited Stoddard, and from which he went home armed with Stoddard's own "South Sea Idylls" and a volume of Herman Melville's "Typee."

The break-down Stevenson experienced after four months in San Francisco, brought on by helping to nurse the Carson baby, was very serious. Dr. Willey of San Francisco was his physician. In the dedication of "Underwood" to his doctors in many parts of the world, of Dr. Willey, Stevenson said, "His kindness to a stranger, it must be as grateful to him as it is touching to me to remember."

Mrs. Osbourne had Stevenson moved to her cottage in East Oakland, where the climate was better for his weak lungs, and where he could have the care he needed. Dr. Bamford was called in to attend him. For six weeks it was a toss-up for life or death. He seemed on the verge of a galloping consumption, he had cold sweats, fever, prostrating attacks of cough, sinking fits in which he lost the power of speech, but after a few weeks he once more began picking up. He said: "I have come out of all this, and got my feet once more on a little hill-top, with a fair prospect of life and some new desire of living. Yet I did not wish to die, neither; only I felt unable to go on farther with that rough horse-play of human life: a man must be pretty well to take the business in good part. Yet I felt all the time I had done nothing to entitle me to an honorable discharge; that I had taken up many obligations and begun many friendships which I had no right to put away from me; and that

for me to die was to play the cur and slinking Sybarite, and desert the colors on the eve of the decisive fight.”

The following lines, written at this same time, express the same thought:

Not yet, my soul, these friendly fields desert.

*Freedom is far, rest far. Thou art with life
Too closely worn, nerve and nerve entwined;
Service still craving service, love for love!
A bond at birth is forged; a debt doth lie
Immortal on mortality.*

*Leave not, my soul, the unfoughten field, nor
leave*

*Thy debts dishonored, nor thy place desert
Without due service rendered.*

*Up, spirit, and defend that fort of clay,
Thy body, now beleaguered; whether soon
Or late she fall; whether to-day thy friends
Bewail thee dead, or, after years, a man
Grown old in honor and the friend of peace,
Contend, my soul, for moments and for
hours;*

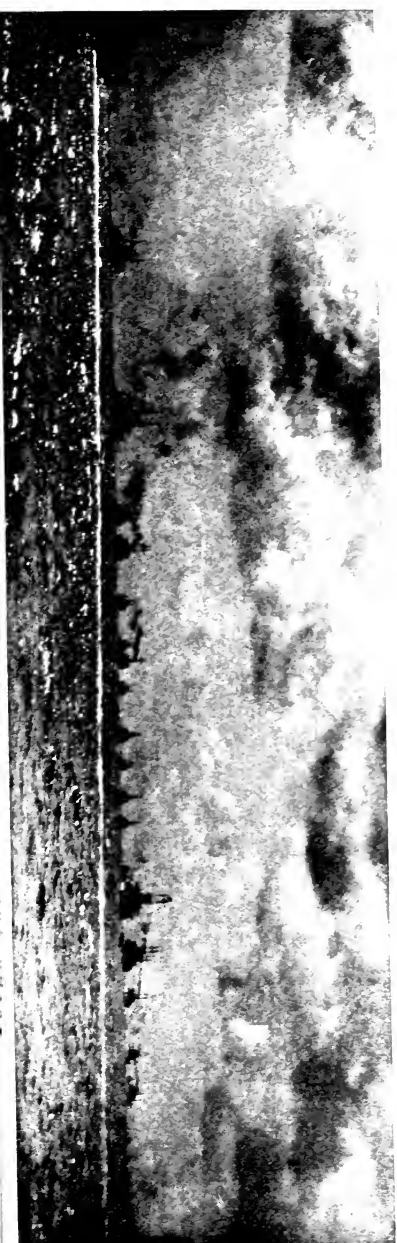
*Each is with service pregnant; each re-
claimed*

Is as a kingdom conquered, where to reign.

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THE GREAT EASTERN RAILROAD

By Pullman Palace Car





No sooner did Stevenson's parents learn of his illness than money was telegraphed him, and the news that he was to count on two hundred and fifty pounds, or twelve hundred dollars odd, a year.

About the same time Mrs. Osbourne obtained a divorce from her husband, but without provision for her or her minor child's support. Stevenson was on the mend, but the doctors gave him no hope of complete recovery, nor even many months to live. An early marriage of himself and Mrs. Osbourne was the best thing for both.

A wife could give him the care he very much needed; and when he died, there would be the pension of a Scottish advocate for his widow; and he believed that his father, who was a man of very comfortable fortune, would also make some provision for her out of an inheritance that would have naturally come to him, his only child. But he was too unselfish a man to have taken a wife for the sake of the care she could give

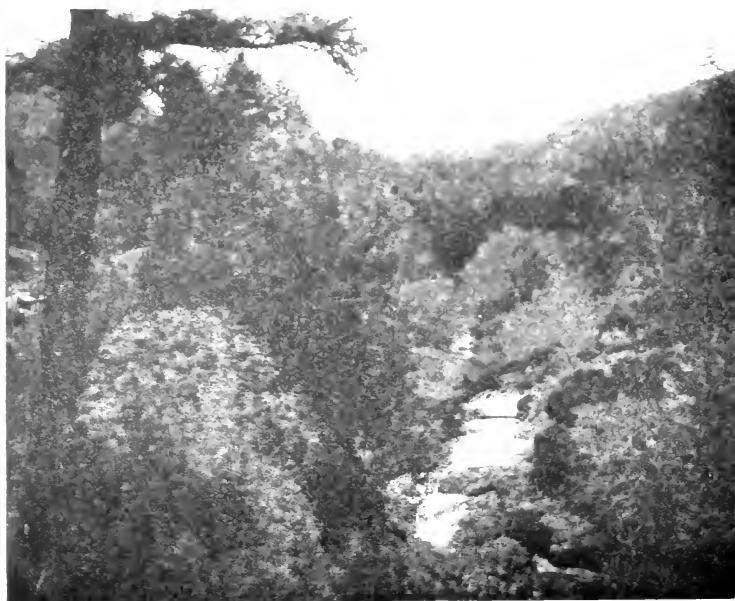
him; and he said afterward, when month after month, and even for years, he experienced only the weary prison of the sick-room, had he known that he would live to be an invalid he never would have married.

The marriage took place quietly in San Francisco, May 19, 1880, in a manner simple and suitable. Mr. Stevenson and his wife together went to the Taylor Street residence of Mrs. Virgil Williams, and she walked with them to the house of the Rev. Dr. Scott, the Presbyterian minister, on Sutter Street, near his church on Union Square. Presbyterian was the denomination of his father's and his mother's families, and if he held broader religious views himself, it was the church in which he had been brought up. Stevenson had been to the minister's before and made the arrangements; and Dr. Scott pronounced the ceremony with only Mrs. Williams as witness.

When Stevenson was about to dedicate "The Silverado Squatters," he wrote:

...

...



WOODS, ON THE WAY TO SILVERADO

“There remain C. S. and the Williamses; you know they were the parties who stuck up for us about the marriage; and Mrs. Williams was my guardian angel, and our best man and bridesmaid rolled into one, and the only third of the wedding party.”

Another time Stevenson, referring to his marriage, said: “It was not my bliss that I was interested in when I was married, it was a sort of marriage *in extremis*; and if I am where I am, it is thanks to the care of that lady who married me when I was a mere complication of cough and bones, much fitter to be an emblem of mortality than a bridegroom.”

As a wedding present the minister gave Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson a volume of his own authorship on some theological subject; and Stevenson sent him afterward a volume (of which he remarked with a certain amused satisfaction, “that it matched in bulk as well as theme”) by his father, Thomas Stevenson, on some

mooted questions about some passages in the Bible.

After their wedding Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson remained a few days in furnished rooms at No. 7 Montgomery Avenue, and then went to Calistoga in Napa Valley. They had in mind to get a small place away from sea fogs, where Stevenson could be out-of-doors all day. "It is the change I want," he wrote, "and the blessed sun, and a gentle air in which I can sit out and see the trees and running water."

The Williamses had a ranch on the slopes of Mount Saint Helena. This influenced their choice of location; and it was a place easy and inexpensive to reach from San Francisco.

The journey to Calistoga, the search for a house, and all the days following in the miner's cabin at the old deserted mine of Silverado are all described with a master's touch in "Silverado Squatters." Copious notes for the book were made on the spot, but the book itself was not writ-



WILLIAMS' RANCH, SANTA HELENA



TOLL HOUSE, SILVERADO

ten until after his return to Europe. He worked on it from time to time, as he wandered from one health resort to another in Switzerland and the Highlands of Scotland, and finally finished it at Hyères in the south of France.

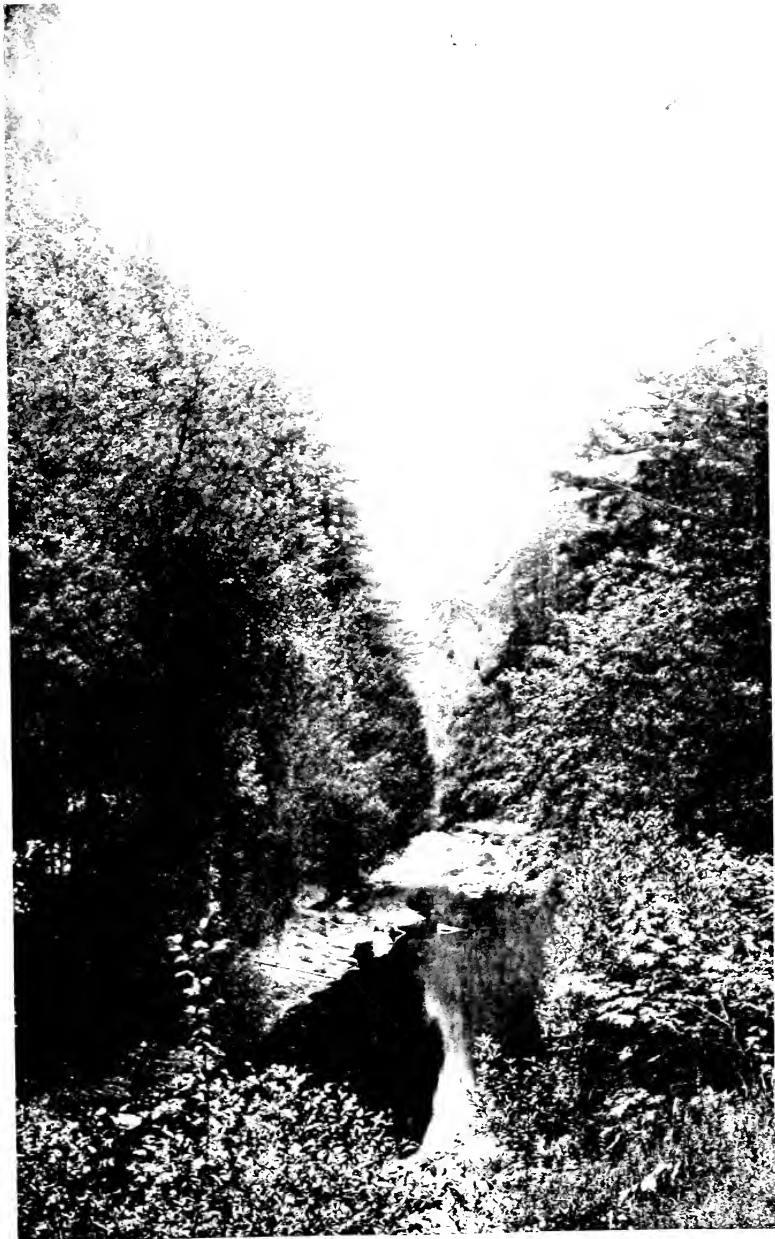
The following is an inscription Stevenson wrote on the fly-leaf of the copy he sent to Virgil and Dora Norton Williams, to whom it is dedicated:

*Here from the forelands of the tideless sea,
Behold and take my offering, unadorned,
Or, shall we say, defaced by Joseph's art.
In the Pacific air it sprang; it grew
Among the silence of the Alpine air;
In Scottish heather blossomed, and at last
By that unshaken sapphire, in whose face
Spain, Italy, France, Algiers, and Tunis
view
Their introverted mountains, came to fruit.
Back now, my Booklet, on the diving ship,
And posting on the rails, to home return,
Home, and the friends whose honoring
name you bear.*

R. L. S.

To reach Mount Saint Helena from San Francisco, Stevenson and his wife went by way of Oakland and Vallejo Junction. The first night on the way was passed in South Vallejo at the Frisby House, a hotel of decayed fortunes set in dismal surroundings, between narrows of an arm of the Bay of San Francisco and some marshy pools. Next day the journey was resumed.

For some way beyond Vallejo the railway ran through bald green pastures extending to low, distant hills. But by and by the hills began to draw nearer on either hand and their sides to be clothed with woods. A great variety of oaks stood sometimes severally, again in groves, among fields and vineyards. There were towns of bright wooden houses overshadowed by great forest trees. This was the green and pleasant Napa Valley. The north end was blockaded by Mount Saint Helena, the place sought by Stevenson. At its foot, where the railroad ceased, was the town of



ON THE WAY TO SILVERADO

Calistoga. Those who intended going farther, to the geysers or to the springs in Lake County, had to cross the mountain by stage. The floor of the valley was level to the very roots of the hills and in the narrowed end was the pleasant and forested town of Calistoga. There was a single street topping the highway that came up the valley and the railroad about parallel to it. The clear, bright, low houses were between the railway station and the road. Alone, on the other side of the railway, stood the Springs Hotel, surrounded by a system of little five-roomed cottages, each with a veranda and a weedy palm before the door. Since Stevenson's day it has been destroyed by fire and risen again from its ashes. It was one of these little country cottages, dependencies of the hotel, that Stevenson and his wife occupied for a time while Stevenson rested and regained his strength. It was a pleasant place to dwell in; often visited by fresh airs, now from Mount Saint

Helena, now across Sonoma from the sea. It was very quiet, very idle, and silent but for the breezes in the trees and the cattle bells in the fields.

The whole neighborhood of Mount Saint Helena is full of sulphur and boiling springs. At one end of the hotel enclosure there bubbled up, from some subterranean lake, water hot enough to scald.

X "There was something satisfactory in the sight of the great mountain enclosing us on the north," wrote Stevenson, "whether it stood robed in sunshine, quaking to its topmost pinnacle with the heat and brightness of the day, or whether it set itself to wearing vapors, wisp after wisp, growing, trembling, fleeting, and fading in the blue." It overtowered everything else, and dwarfed the tangled, woody, foothills. In no part of the valley is it ever out of sight. Its profile is bold, the great bald summit, clear of trees and pasture, was a cairn of quartz and cinnabar. X



MONTE VINCIGUERRA



Sometimes it was seen framed in a grove of oaks. Sometimes in a picture of blue hilly distance this bulk of mountain rose, bare atop, with tree-fringed spurs, the most conspicuous figure.

The woods about Calistoga were species of trees new to Stevenson, the madrona, the manzanita, the wild nutmeg, and the bay, and here for the first time he walked amid redwoods. Here also he noted the imminent destruction of all these most magnificent of forests, saw the circles of young trees that spring around the ruins of the old and larger trees, for Calistoga has not escaped the woodman and the lumberman. "Redwoods and redskins, the two noblest indigenous living things, alike condemned."

All the slopes of Mount Saint Helena, now so quiet and sylvan, were once alive with mining camps and villages. But luck failed and mines petered out. The army of miners had departed and left deserted towns and empty houses behind them. Stevenson had heard of

one such place, Pine Flat, on the Geysers road, where he might get a ready-made house rent free in a climate where he hoped to regain his health. But a roof overhead and a spring of water at the door does not solve the squatter's whole problem. Food had yet to be considered, and the necessity of living on canned meats and milk, on being dependent on the stage drivers to bring supplies, made Pine Flat impossible. The store-keeper of Calistoga, a Russian Jew, whom Stevenson named Kelmar in "Silverado Squatters," was consulted. Kelmar shook his head at the mention of Pine Flat. Later, one fine morning, he announced to Stevenson that he had found the very place for him, — Silverado, another old mining town right up the mountain. That his help in settling the Stevensons at Silverado was not wholly disinterested they found later when they came to know how all the people of the region were vassals of the Jew store-keeper, made so by credit he



MOUNT TAMALPAIS



offered till they were beyond their depth. In this instance every penny expended at Silverado found its way into Kelmar's till at last.

Kelmar himself, accompanied by his wife and a friend and her little daughter, drove Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson one Sunday morning to Silverado. The road ran for two miles through the valley, skirting the eastern foothills; then it struck off to the right through high land and presently, crossing a dry water-course, entered the Toll road, or, as it was called, "the grade." This mounted a shoulder of Mount Saint Helena. In one place it skirted the edge of a narrow deep cañon, filled with trees. Vineyards and meadows gave way to woods of oak and madrona, dotted with pines, as it ascended.

The road crossed the summit of the ridge and plunged down a deep, thickly wooded glen on the farther side. At the highest point in the road a trail struck up the main hill to the leftward which

led to Silverado. A hundred yards beyond, in a kind of elbow of the glen, stood the Toll House Hotel.

The house was gray and of two stories, with gable ends and a veranda. There were also stables and a water-tank. All were jammed hard against the hillside, just where a stream had cut for itself a narrow cañon, filled with pines. The pines went right up overhead and the stream could easily have been made to play on the roof like a fire-hose. In front of the hotel the ground dropped as sharply as it rose behind. There was just room for the road and a small flat used for a croquet ground. The toll-bar itself was a long beam, turning on a post and upheld by the counterweight of stones. At sunset this barrier was swung across the road and made fast to a tree.

Arrived at the Toll House the town of Silverado was sought on foot. A hill had to be climbed and woods stumbled through before the Stevensons, followed by the Kelmars, came out upon the

sought-for site of the old mining town. But here was a disappointment. A single house bearing the sign, "Silverado Hotel," was remaining. All the other houses had been moved away; one of them was being used as a school-house far down the road. There was not another sign of habitation besides the "Silverado Hotel," and it was already occupied by one Rufe Hanson and his family. But it was the Hansons that made known the existence of some cabins at the tunnel of the mines.

About a furlong from Silverado, at the end of a road that ran along the hillside through the forest, was the mine. A cañon, wooded below, red, rocky, and naked overhead, was walled across by a dump of rolling stones, steep and about thirty feet high. A rusty iron chute on wooden props extended beyond the top.

It was down this the ore from the mine was wont to be poured into carts which stood waiting below ready to carry it to the mill down the mountain. To mount

the dump, two lengths of wooden ladder, fixed in the hillside, had to be ascended. Beyond the dump over loose rubble a triangular earth platform was reached, filling up the whole glen and shut in on either hand by the bold projections of the mountains. "Only in front was the place open like the proscenium of a theatre, and it looked forth into a great realm of air and down upon tree tops and hilltops, and far and near on wild and varied country." The place remained as it had been deserted: a line of iron rails, a truck, lumber, old wood, old iron, a blacksmith's forge on one side half buried in madronas, and on the other an old brown wooden house of three rooms. Farther behind in the overgrown cañon there was a great crazy staging in front of an open shaft leading edgewise into the mountain. Close by, another shaft led edgewise up into the superincumbent shoulder of the hill. It lay partly open and, high above, the strata were propped apart by solid wooden



wedges. There was also a horizontal tunnel running back, straight into the mountain. The view on farther up the cañon was a glimpse of devastation, — crags, dry red minerals, and here and there a dwarf thicket, very unlike the green downward view toward the valley.

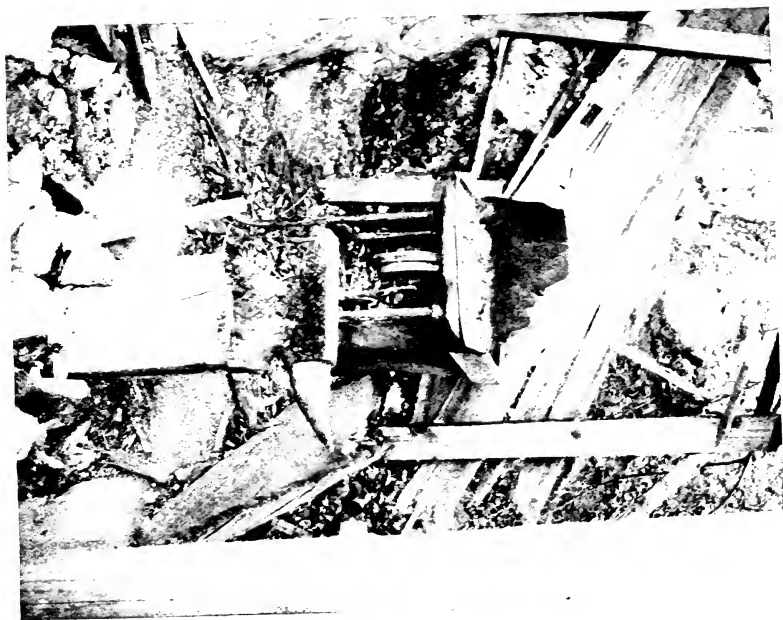
The house was but the cabin for miners. The three rooms were on three different elevations as they could find room and resting-place at the side of the narrow cañon. It was in a state of utter dilapidation without a window-sash in place and all but one door gone. The foliage of the bay overgrew the windows, and poison oak and other bushes had begun to sprout through the broken planks of the floor. The first room had been the assayer's office. The second room, entered from a different side and on a different level and by a plank propped against the threshold, had been the bedroom of the miners. A triple tier of beds lined two opposite sides. The third room was higher up the hill and farther up the

cañon. It contained only rubbish and the uprights for another triple tier of beds. The whole building was overhung by a great projecting rock, and overgrown with tall bushes.

There seemed no other choice and who of a romantic and gypsy turn of mind would ask for anything else? The deserted mine and miners' cabin was chosen.

That night the Stevensons stopped at the Toll House and next day were picked up by the Kelmars on their homeward way from their extended trip into Lake County. They returned to Calistoga to prepare for the flitting.

A few days later all things were ready for the squatting at Silverado. Stevenson could always make of his surroundings a story, could always see himself in a romantic situation. It was thus that he got through with spirit more than one weary stage, saved himself the tedium of more than one dreary hour. This time the play was that of the "king and queen." They rode in a double buggy



THE BLAINE SMITH'S FORGE, SILVERADO



toward the new possessions, and the "crown prince" — Mrs. Stevenson's twelve-year-old son — was on horseback like an outrider. The baggage was left for the Hanson team which was to follow. Half-way up the hill, beside the road, they came to a silent and ruined mill where once the ore from the mine had been carted, and, carrying out the play, they held it as being a part of the Silverado mining property, to be an outlying province of their own.

It was late afternoon when the royal squatters took possession of their newly acquired dominion. There was a great deal to be done before even it was a fit camping place for a night. Rubbish had to be cleared from the rooms and hay brought for beds. Stevenson with pick and shovel deepened the pool behind the shaft to collect sufficient water from a spring that trickled there, for their domestic uses. A fire was lit in the blacksmith's forge across from the other larger house. The afternoon thus wore away

to evening and the baggage had not arrived, — the royal family were supperless.

It was between seven and eight when the Hanson wagon with boxes, bags, and cold provender arrived, and much later before the baggage could all be got up the crazy ladders and the breakneck spout of rolling mineral, and landed in the house. In time the assayer's office was thronged with their belongings, piled higgledy-piggledy and upside down, about the floor. Then it was discovered that Mrs. Stevenson had left the keys in Calistoga, where the chimney of the stove had likewise been forgotten. A stove plate had been lost somewhere on the road. The important thing, however, was at hand, food. The squatters ate that night in the disorder of the assayer's office, perched among the boxes. Hay brought from the Toll House filled two of the lowest bunks in the tier of beds. A single candle, stuck in the mouth of a bottle, gave them light.



It was a dismal beginning, and only a determination to make the best of things saved a retreat on the first night of occupation and the hope of the bright day of sunshine a few hours ahead.

Next morning was full of business, clearing up floors, patching up doors and windows, substituting white cotton cloth for panes, making beds and seats and getting the rough lodging into livable shape. There was wood to be cut and a young man, Mrs. Hanson's brother, was engaged for the job. He proved himself so lazy and worthless that he was more of a nuisance than a help. He was beautiful as a statue, but "had the soul of a fat sheep." It was a cruel thought that persons (and he meant himself) less favored in their birth than this creature, "endowed — to use the language of theatres — with extraordinary 'means,' should so manage to misemploy them," said Stevenson.

One morning there was an occurrence that proved the wisdom of the choice of

Silverado as a sanitarium for Stevenson. A sea fog rolled in, filling the valley and blotting out every feature of the country and rising almost to the mine, even so far as the Toll House, and only a projection of the mountain saved their own little cañon. It was to flee these fogs, disastrous to his lungs, that Stevenson had left the seaboard and climbed so high among the mountains. The description of this morning of fog in Napa Valley, seen from above from the mine in "Silverado Squatters," is one of the finest descriptions in all Stevenson's writings.

The Toll House beside the road, a little over the summit of the ridge, played a great part in the life of the Stevensons that summer. There was little traffic on the Toll road, but at fixed hours there arrived the stages daily crossing and returning from Calistoga to Lake County. Their coming threw the quiet, sleepy tavern into a moment of life and bustle. A little before stage time the



SEA FOG FILLING NAPA VALLEY



squatters left their aerie, climbed down the rickety ladders, and descended by the rough path through the undergrowth out upon the highway and to the Toll House. The first of the two stages swooped upon the Toll House with a roar and a cloud of dust. Hardly would the horses be reined in before the second was abreast of it. There was generally a full load of passengers, men in shirt sleeves, women swathed in veils and all covered with the dust of the road. "The heart-felt bustle of that hour is hardly credible," wrote Stevenson; "the childish hope and interest with which one gazed in all these strangers' eyes. They paused there but to pass: the blue-clad China-boy, the San Francisco magnate, the mystery in the dust-coat, the secret memoirs in tweed, the ogling, well-shod lady with her troop of girls; they did but flash and go; they were hull down for us behind life's ocean, and we but hailed their top-sails on the line. Yet, out of our great solitude of four and

twenty hours, we thrilled to their momentary presence; gauged and divined them, loved and hated; and stood light-headed in that storm of human electricity." In the stage came also the post-bag with its letters to prolong the pleasure of communication with man, even when the huge and heavy stages had gone on their opposite ways.

In the resumed silence on the veranda of the Toll House, with the green dell below, the spires of pines, the sun-warm, scented air, the letters and the daily papers, bringing news of the turbulent world below, occupied a part of the afternoon ere the squatters returned to their lone position at the mouth of the tunnels to the mines.

There came an interruption in life at Silverado. Mrs. Stevenson and her young son fell ill. The three squatters had to hurry back to Calistoga and a cottage on the green. It is no small amount of labor that it costs to support life even amid the simple surroundings



FRENCH RESIDENCE OF STEVENSON

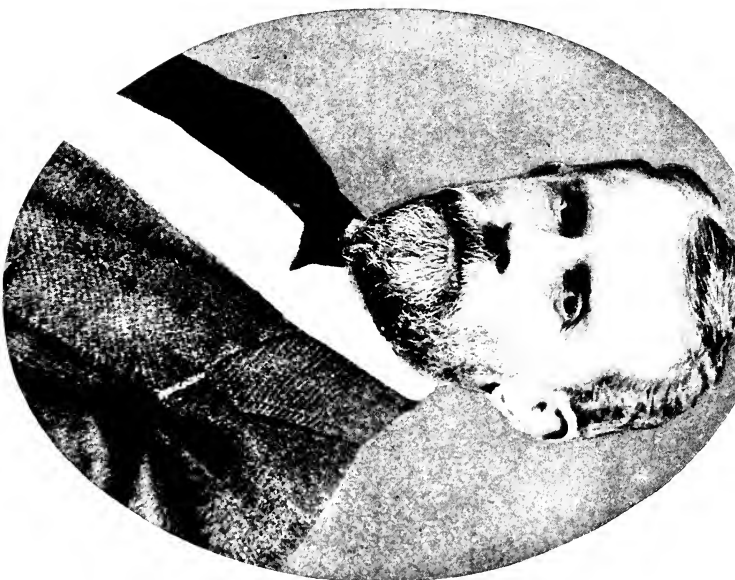
*Whence He Despatched His Letter to Simouneau and
Finished "Silverado Squatters"*

of a mountain cañon. It was desired to find a China-boy to take back with them on their return. This wish could not be realized for no China-boy could be found that was willing to go.

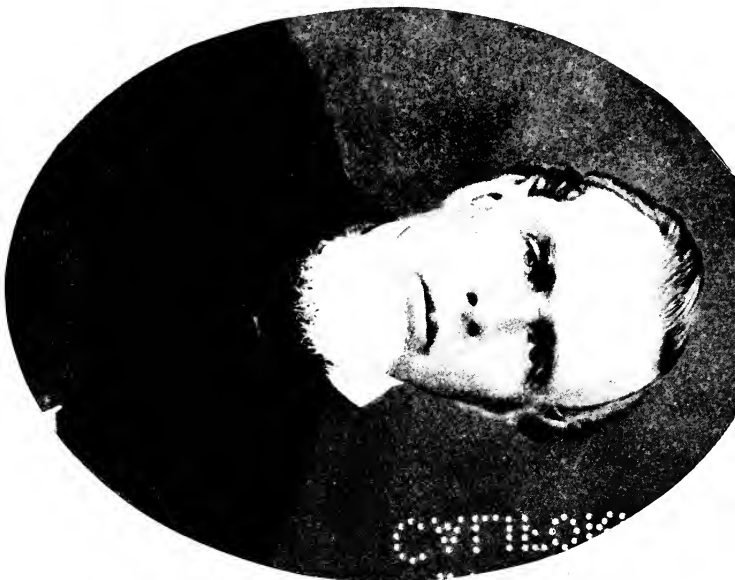
But the Stevensons were not, however, to return alone. Joe Strong, Mrs. Stevenson's son-in-law, joined them at Calistoga and returned "home" with them. The journey up the mountain side this time was made in the dark. There was a display of stars for a short time before the moon rose that night, such as Stevenson had never before seen. "The difference between a calm and a hurricane is not greatly more striking than that between the ordinary face of night and the splendor that shone upon us in that drive. Two in our wagon knew night as she shines upon the tropics, but even that bore no comparison. The nameless color of the sky, the hues of the star-fire, and the incredible projection of the stars themselves, starting from their orbits, so that the

eye seemed to distinguish their positions in the hollow of space — these were things that we had never seen before and shall never see again. The sunlight flooded the pale islet of the moon, and her lit face put out, one after another, that galaxy of stars. The wonder of the drive was over; but, by some nice conjunction of clearness in the air and fir shadow in the valley where we travelled, we had seen for a little while that brave display of the midnight heavens. It was gone, but it had been; nor shall I ever again behold the stars with the same mind."

Only in a climate like that of California was such a life as that of the squatters possible. The house was everywhere so wrecked and shattered, the air came and went so freely, the sun found so many port-holes, the light came through so many chinks, that life under its roof was much the same as alfresco. A single shower of rain would have made the place uninhabitable. Moreover, the



VIRGIL WILLIAMS



DR. W. BAMFORD
East Oakland

cabin answered only for bedroom and kitchen. On the earth platform in front, or in the shade of the madronas in the little corner near the forge, were passed all the hours of daylight.

In the first hours of the morning Stevenson, as was his wont, always did his writing. For the rest of the day, it was spent lying down or wandering on the platform, carrying a few pails of water from the shaft, meeting the stage at the Toll House, and a long evening, again under the stars on the platform.

It was a good life for Stevenson and brought him rest, contentment, and health. It could not have endured. Such a life is only for a season for human beings, and for Stevenson, with all his love for change and new experiences and problems, it could not have gone on long. But before he had begun to weary, before his restless spirit began to assert itself, there came a letter from Edinburgh from his father and mother begging for his return home. They wearied

to see their son and there was a welcome extended to his new wife and his stepson.

Yielding to their desires, late in July, Silverado was deserted. The Stevensons returned to San Francisco only to prepare for the journey to Scotland. So just about a year from the time Stevenson first set foot in California he bade good-bye to those Western shores. On the seventh day of August, 1880, he took passage from New York bound for his Scottish home; and California knew him no more for a while.

Silverado, however, had not fully established his health. It was too wracked for any complete cure. The whole history of the succeeding years was one weary search from place to place, country to country, for a climate and conditions where he could have even a small measure of health. Again and again hemorrhages from the lungs brought him to the point of death, and weeks and months at a time he was

scarcely out of his bedroom. "I think I was made, what there is of me, of whipcord and thorn switches. Surely I am tough," was his comment on coming through so many terrible illnesses.

He kept on at his work when he was at all able; but that was his pleasure and the only thing that made his life tolerable through languor and pain; and expression is always the artist's necessity and supremest joy.

"An art is a fine fortune, a palace in a park, a band of music, health, and physical beauty; all but love — to any worthy practiser. I sleep upon my art for a pillow; I waken in my art; I am unready for death because I hate to leave it. I love my wife, I do not know how much, nor can, nor shall, unless I lost her; but while I can conceive my being widowed, I refuse the offering of life without my art. I *am* not but in my art; it is me. I am the body of it merely."

Far away and through changing scenes

he never forgot his California experiences nor his California friends. To the number was added in Samoa Thomas Wilkinson of Oakland, whom he met in Apia. During his stay in the islands Mr. Wilkinson was much at Vailima. When he returned home to Oakland, Stevenson, acknowledging for Mrs. Stevenson a gift of roses Mr. Wilkinson had sent her, said: "Present our respects to Mrs. and Miss Wilkinson. Tell them they ought to be nice people, — they are certainly fortunate in a husband and a father; and add that if you lost fifty-six pounds weight, you left it all behind here in the shape of good will."

"The Wrecker" was not the only book written in the South Sea which referred to California. There are verses and there is also the "Bottle Imp." Keawe received the bottle from an elderly man, living in one of the great houses on Nob Hill in San Francisco.

In 1877, the death of his father, Thomas Stevenson, the distinguished en-

gineer, cut the bond that held Robert Louis Stevenson to Europe. His mother was ready to go with him anywhere that would give him health and happiness. So with her and his wife and step-son, Lloyd Osbourne, he sailed again for America.

He stopped the winter in the Adirondack Mountains, which greatly strengthened him for the time being; but a yacht and the glory of the sea and in particular the beautiful blue Pacific, which he had learned to love in Monterey, were loudly calling him. And so in June, 1888, he found himself in San Francisco once more.

On the first morning after his arrival, with his mother to accompany him, — for she wished to go to thank Mrs. Carson herself for all she had been to her boy that long sad winter he spent in her house, — he found himself again in Bush Street, passed in front of Donadieu's restaurant, and, climbing the hill, arrived at the old number, 608. But the house

in which Stevenson had lived was gone and a new one had taken its place, and Mrs. Carson, too, was gone.

The Stevensons were staying at the old Occidental Hotel on Montgomery Street. Stevenson got into communication with Mrs. Carson and sent for her to come to the hotel, as has already been related. His strength had been terribly exhausted by the trip across the continent. It was by sheer force of will alone that he had kept his little spark of life from going out entirely.

But he greatly longed for this voyage he had so often dreamed of since his first visit to Stoddard's rooms on Telegraph Hill, and even before that. When he was a boy of seventeen, Mr. Seed, of New Zealand, told him of Samoa: "Beautiful places, green forever; beautiful people, with red flowers in their hair and nothing to do but study oratory and etiquette." To these accounts he had sat up all night to listen, and was sick with desire to go there; so it was by deter-

mination alone that he lived to reach San Francisco, and through the days of preparation in fitting out a yacht for the intended cruise. His friends had all to seek him at the Occidental Hotel, where he was scarcely an hour out of bed.

Mrs. Williams, always ready to be of assistance to him, remembers accompanying him to the bank, to arrange about his money and drafts and remittances while he should be away in the yacht.

How Stevenson chartered the schooner yacht *Casco*, seventy tons, Captain Otis, owned by Dr. Merritt, of Oakland, is all known to history. Several weeks, part of which time Stevenson berthed aboard when the yacht lay in the Oakland estuary, were spent in fitting her out for a six months' cruise to the Marquesas, Tahiti, and the Paumotos, and how Stevenson never came back, but found health and happiness and seven years of added life among the South Sea Islands, is also known.

His stay turned into exile, for he found that only in the South Seas could he live; and sad days and longing for familiar friends and faces succeeded, especially in the last years of his life; but he never again even ventured so far as San Francisco. "The mere extent of a man's travel has in it something consolatory. That he should have left friends and enemies in many different and distant quarters gives a sort of earthly dignity to his existence; and I think the better of myself for the belief that I have left some in California interested in me and my success."

Letters to Mrs. Williams arrived from Samoa; and in that island where he made his home he found one last little connection with California in the friendship of Mr. Wilkinson, of Oakland, who went to Apia, Samoa, to try its effect on his failing health. Mr. Wilkinson had many pleasant conferences with Stevenson when he rode down from his mountain home, Vailima, to the beach, and

when Mr. Wilkinson visited Vailima. At the time, Mrs. Stevenson was much engaged in making and planting some flower beds; and on his return to Oakland Mr. Wilkinson sent Mrs. Stevenson some roses for her garden.

We have spoken of "The Wrecker" and the description of the entrance into California. Other parts of this book are full of characters and places in San Francisco. "The Speedy," while not them in entirety, was suggested by the Carsons and their propensity to gamble in mining stocks, no matter how wild-cat. To San Francisco again his mind reverted in the story of "The Bottle Imp," written in Samoa for Samoans, and the bottle was first found in the possession of one living on Nob Hill.

With a mind quickened and tuned with his Western experiences, his memory stored with its incidents, bound with ties of friendship, in a peculiar sense Robert Louis Stevenson was a Californian. The great State may wear him as one of the

brightest jewels, and pay honor and homage to his memory as, if adopted, the most loving and gifted and brave of her sons.

THE LITTLE BRONZE SHIP

By W. O. MCGEEHAM

*Read at the Stevenson Fellowship Banquet at San Francisco
on Stevenson's birthday, Nov. 13, 1909.*

When the night comes, the little bronze ship on the Stevenson Monument, Portsmouth Square, San Francisco, seems to grow restless in the moonlight. Sometimes it is said the little vessel puts out on a cruise to the southwest manned by a phantom crew.

LEGEND OF PORTSMOUTH SQUARE

*Oh, the little bronze ship at the anchor chain
tugs*

*And the light on the bright sails gleams,
In the moonshine and mist it is headed south-
west*

For a cruise on the sea of dreams.

*All deserted the anchorage place in the square,
There are none who may look at it now;
With a brave off-shore wind that is warning
behind*

It is churning the foam with its prow.

*With a queer phantom crew it is off on the
blue,*

*And the blocks in the rigging ring,
When the wraith voices rise to the tropical
skies*

And this is the song that they sing:

“Fifteen men on a dead man’s chest,

Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!

Drink and the devil had done with the rest,

Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!”

*There is Morgan, and Merry, and savage
Long John*

*With his crutch, on the little bronze ship,
And old Smollett, the Skipper, is shaking his
head,*

*As he thinks of that other trip;
 And the oracle parrot, the sage Captain Flint,
 Still is chatt'ring of bloodshed and wreck.
 With his big dreamy eyes staring up at the skies,
 See, the master is pacing the deck.*

*There are doubloons and loot, there is battle
 to boot,
 Ere they ever return to their port;
 With a rhythmical swing now the crew's voices
 ring
 In a song of a gruesome sort:
 "Fifteen men on a dead man's chest,
 Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!
 Drink and the devil had done with the rest,
 Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!"*

*Oh, the little bronze ship has returned to its place
 To the stone by the poplar trees,
 And the little bronze sails though they gleam
 in the sun
 Will not answer the morning breeze.
 Now the ghost song has died on the pale phan-
 tom lips,
 And gone are the mast and the men,
 And the little bronze ship is back safe from the
 trip
 Till it goes on a cruise again.*

*There it lies through the day, till the noise
 dies away*

IN CALIFORNIA

*And the moonshine is soft on the square:
Then its queer phantom crew take it out on
the blue*

*And their chanty rings weird on the air:
"Fifteen men on a dead man's chest,
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!
Drink and the devil had done with the rest,
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum."*

THE END



TJ

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